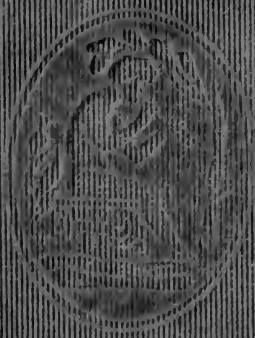

Class PR1195

Book .S5L6

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

(2)

The Riverside Literature Series

SONNETS

SELECTED FROM ENGLISH AND AMERICAN AUTHORS

BY

LAURA E. LOCKWOOD, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE

BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

PR1195
.S5L6

COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

R. L. S. 244

#035

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE . MASSACHUSETTS
U . S . A

JAN 24 1916

©CLA420470

PREFACE

In bringing together this group of sonnets, I have had in mind, first, the lover of English poetry who will, I hope, welcome a small and convenient volume containing so many of his favorite sonnets; and secondly, my own students of Milton, who come to the reading of his sonnets with a vague interest in this form of poetry, but with little historical or technical knowledge about it. They need to read before and after Milton, in order to understand him by comparing his work with that of others; and the sonnet collections hitherto made from the whole field of English literature are in volumes too expensive for use in large classes.

With these objects in mind, I have read from Wyatt and Surrey to the authors in the last number of *Poetry*, selecting and rejecting, culling and re-culling, until I here offer what seems to me representative of the best English sonnets. There appears a slightly larger proportion of sonnets before Shakespeare, because these are least well known and also the most difficult to obtain. Except in two or three cases, sonnets have been excluded whose entire theme is the description of natural scenery, since such subjects rarely have the inherent unity demanded by the sonnet, however beautiful they may be as poetry. The fact that sonnets have appeared in other collections has not in the least influenced their inclusion or exclusion, for the "best is the best, though a hundred judges have declared it so." The working basis has been to seek sonnets with a clear theme, a definite something to say; and as far as possible to choose only those that develop this thought, according to a clearly conceived plan, in musical, imaginative language. But by no means is every one of these two hundred sonnets great, for a great sonnet is one of the rarest things in literature; real greatness has been

achieved in few cases. Some of the sonnets have been included for significance of thought, although faulty in rhyme scheme or lacking power in music; others below excellence in thought, development, or diction have been given place, because they are the highest achievement of the unpoetical age in which they were written. If, however, all together they represent the best our English poets have accomplished, they show how rich, varied, and significant is the message of the sonnet.

My choice will, doubtless, not meet the approval of any one person, but wherever my judgment is questioned and my sins of commission and omission are condemned, there must necessarily be comparison and discussion; and this will inevitably further intelligence regarding the sonnet and stimulate interest in its poetry, which is the chief end and purpose of this little book.

Many of these sonnets are from books copyrighted by Houghton Mifflin Company; others are reprinted by courteous permission of various publishers. A conscientious effort has been made to search out the holders of all copyrights, and it is hoped that no acknowledgments have unintentionally been omitted.

LAURA E. LOCKWOOD.

INTRODUCTION

FORM

The word "sonnet" is derived from the Italian *suono*, sound, with the diminutive suffix added; its meaning is, then, "a little sound." This term was clearer to the Italians, from whom we borrowed the poem, than it is to us, for they were in the habit of accompanying this form of verse with music. Petrarch sang his own sonnets to the sound of the lute, and it was not unusual to hear the minstrels singing them from street to street. Indeed, the Italians hardly thought of the sonnet except as accompanied by music.

The rules for the composition of the sonnet have been fixed by the acceptance and practice of the best writers; another kind of lyric may choose its number of feet to the line, or lines to the stanza, but the sonnet must have fourteen lines and no more, must have five beats to each line, neither fewer nor greater in number. It was not, however, to the Italians any poem of fourteen five-stress lines, the subject being expanded according to the caprice of the poet; on the contrary, it should have, if it were a regular sonnet,[1] a clear and unified theme, stated in the first quatrain, developed or proved in the second, confirmed or regarded from a new point of view in the first tercet, and concluded in the second tercet. It had thus four parts, divided unevenly into two separate systems, eight lines being devoted to placing the thought before the mind, and six to deducing the conclusion from that thought.

This division was made clearer by the use of pause and rhyme. There were three times when the poet should pause,

[1] There were also *tailed sonnets*, with short-lined stanzas following; *iterating sonnets*, having only one or two rhymes; *interwoven sonnets*, in which words in the middle of the lines rhymed as well as those at the end; and several other forms.

after having given a definite phase of his subject, before he presented it in a new and brighter light. The pauses were thus a logical part of the plan to show a theme unfolding in a clear, yet prescribed way; they were not used merely for the sake of pause, or just to make the poem appear neater, but as transition that would render the logic more apparent. Moreover, the rigid rhyme scheme aided this use of pause in the careful blocking out of thought. The quatrains, *a b b a a b b a*, were alike and held together by the repeating *a*, yet kept apart by the definite unity of pattern in each; thus emphasizing the separation and the similarity of statement and proof. The confirmation and conclusion, however, must be still further set apart by a new rhyme scheme, neither reproducing nor suggesting the succession of sounds in the quatrain; the new scheme did not, indeed, admit any of the rhyming letters allowed in the quatrains, and it prescribed another and different arrangement of rhymes. The favorite order of the sestet was, *c d e c d e* or *c d c d c d;* but here much license was allowed in the placing of rhymes. The rhyming of the last two lines was in general avoided; both Dante and Petrarch in a few instances tried this closing rhyme, but evidently considered it unsuitable because it would divide the lines from the rest of the sonnet and give them a peculiar significance that might detract from the perfect unity of the whole.

The aim and desire of the great Italian writers was that the sonnet should close leaving the reader with the sense of finish and completeness, with the feeling of having been given the thought in its full relation and also its final result. It must not, therefore, work up steadily from the first line to a climax at the last line, for then no conclusion or consequence was possible; nor must it be developed through twelve lines, to be finished off with an epigrammatic turn of thought in the last two lines, since this was merely to startle or surprise the mind of the reader.

No feeble or obscure line could be allowed to stand, and no important word should be used twice, unless such repetition were necessary for some peculiar effect. The utmost econ-

omy must be practiced, if the poet was to present his thought entire and in a convincing, satisfying manner. Such were the exacting laws which the greatest Italian poets sought to follow in their efforts to create a perfect sonnet.

This does not mean that the laws were absolute and that the poets made no experiments, but comparatively few irregular sonnets from the well-known writers remain to testify the search for another form. Out of 327 written by Petrarch, 310 follow the quatrain rhyme scheme as given above, and 301 conform to either the first or the second plan for the sestet.

Our earliest writers, Wyatt and Surrey, accepted the dictum of the Italians as far as number of lines and of feet to the line, but experimented with rhyme. Wyatt almost always follows Petrarch in the octave; the sestet he closes with a rhymed couplet. Surrey was less easily satisfied on the delicate subject of rhyme; he never employs the Italian rhyme scheme, but usually has three quatrains in alternate rhyme with a couplet at the close, or he uses six alternate rhymes with one of these forming the closing couplet; sometimes again a new rhyme appears in the last two lines. These two pioneers consistently employed the closing couplet, which shows that they either had not grasped the relation of rhyme to thought in the Italian scheme, or considered another arrangement better adapted to the English language.

Since the century of Wyatt and Surrey, the best of our English poets have established by use the canon of fourteen five-stress lines as essential to the sonnet; they have made still further experiments with rhyme. Many combinations and variations of rhyme schemes have been tried. Three clear types have, however, predominated: that modeled on the form of Petrarch, the octave *a b b a a b b a*, and two or three new rhymes variously arranged in the sestet; that devised by Surrey, but usually called after Shakespeare since his sonnets are the most famous composed in this form, *a b a b c d c d e f e f g g;* and that contrived by Spenser, *a b a b b c b c c d c d e e,* which has had fewer followers than the other

two and at present is not often used. The English sonnet composed on one of these patterns may, then, have four, five, six, or seven rhymes, but of these three prevailing types there have been and are still many modifications. For example: Shelley's *Ozymandias*, Hallam's *Written in Edinburgh*, Dobell's *The Army Surgeon*, and Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier*. Since, however, the sonnet is a poem deriving part of its charm and power from the fact that the form is conventional and familiar to the ear of the reader, no one of these erratic rhyme schemes has found many followers. The modern sonnet remains, with few exceptions, loyal to the scheme of Petrarch or to that of Shakespeare.[1]

As far as the manner of developing the thought is concerned we have three distinct methods in English. The sonnet may, as the Petrarchian sonnet usually does, begin and grow to a climax at the end of the eighth line, closing quietly through the following six lines in a natural sequence of thought; secondly, it may be presented by three different statements of the idea, which is the way Shakespeare builds his sonnets, and close with a two-line application, conclusion, or proof; or, lastly, the thought may run over from the octave into the sestet, and the break come, if there is any break at all, later in the poem. Milton was the first to construct sonnets according to this third plan; Wordsworth and later poets very often follow his example. Whichever scheme is adopted, rhyme and pause should be used to interpret and support the plan of thought development, and in the best sonnets this is always the case. But the English poets, loving to play with this little musical instrument of the sonnet, have experimented as often in ways of unfolding the thought as in the manner of arranging the rhymes.

HISTORY

The complexity of the sonnet form would lead one to suppose a long period of experimentation before the laws were evolved, settled, and accepted by poets as a convention not

[1] For the reason of this loyalty, see the discussion by Watts in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edition), vol. XXII, p. 262.

to be violated. Although this was in all probability the case, there is a very incomplete record of such tentative feeling after form. Among the earliest known examples occur those with the same number of lines and of feet to the line, as well as something of the same rhyme and pause scheme, as are found in the sonnet at the height of its popularity. Its origin, then, becomes a matter for the labor, or the skillful guessing, of the scholar, a question still of much controversy and of apparently impossible solution. Several theories have been advanced, each having its supporters among students of Italian literature.

Some hold that the sonnet is a development of the Greek epigram.[1] However, the more commonly defended theories are: first, that the Italian singers borrowed the form, or something approximate to it, from the Provençal troubadours,[2] and this thesis has been warmly supported, especially by the French critics; secondly, that the sonnet came to birth in Italy itself or at least in Sicily.[3] Those who contend that Sicily is to be accorded the fame of creating this form of poem argue that the poets evolved it by working upon Arabic models at the court of William II of Sicily (1166–89), whose devotion to Arab literature made his court a center of that study, and that it continued to flourish at the court of his successor, Frederick II (1189–1250). Other critics are as firmly convinced that Tuscany or central Italy should have the honor, but they divide themselves into two camps as regards the source poem out of which the sonnet grew. The one group attempt to show that it resulted from a combination of two short love-lyrics, called *strombotti;*[4] the octave was originally the eight-line *strombotto*, rhyming *a b a b a b a b* and the sestet the six-line *strombotto* with rhyme, *c d c d c d*. These two the poets combined, varying the line and changing four feet to five, and thus produced the sonnet. The

[1] William Sharp, *Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century*, p. xxxi.

[2] Sidney Lee, *Elizabethan Sonnets* (London, 1904), vol. I, p. xiii. M. Louis de Vayrieres, *Monographie du Sonnet* (Paris, 1869).

[3] Francesco Trucchi, *Poesie italiane* (Prato, 1846), pp. xxvi–xxx. Heinrich Welti, *Geschichte des Sonnettes* (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 1–54.

[4] Tommaso Casini, *Le Forme metriche italiana* (Firenze, 1890), pp. 35–38. Charles Tomlinson, *The Sonnet* (London, 1874), pp. 7–29.

other group hold that it was modeled on one of the stanzas of a love-song, called a *canzone*.[1] These popular songs were constructed in many ways; one of the forms frequently used may have been the source of the sonnet, as the lines of the stanza were fourteen and the rhyme scheme similar to that later used by the sonnetteers. For example, the stanzas of a *canzone* by Guittone d' Arezzo rhyme *a b b a a b b a a c c a d d.* The octave is here ready-made in form, and the sestet suffers only change of rhyme. There are strong arguments for, as well as against, both the Italian and the Provençal origin of the sonnet, but no critic has as yet adduced convincing proof to establish the claims of either country.

Practically all critics are agreed, whatever theory of origin they hold, that the earliest known writers were Ludovico della Vernaccia (about 1200), Giacomo da Lentino (about 1210), and Piero delle Vigne (1181?–1249); and that Guittone d' Arezzo (1220–94) was the first poet who composed a sonnet in the form later approved and accepted by the Italian writers. The sonnet rapidly became popular in Italy, was used with great skill by Dante, and brought to the height of its perfection by Petrarch.

Whatever its origin in land or poem, Pattison is certainly right when he says, "The sonnet — both thing and name — comes to us from the Italian." [2] And it came not by accident or unconscious imitation, but brought by the poets Thomas Wyatt (1503–1642) and the Earl of Surrey (1515–47), with the definite purpose of introducing it into England. They had traveled in Italy and fallen under the spell of Petrarch; returning to England, they set about a reform of English literature. Puttenham tells us: "They greatly polished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be said the first reformers of our English metre and stile." [3] The low estate of English poetry is clear when such rough lines and poor rhymes as those of Wyatt were considered a reformation.

[1] Mary Bowen, *Influence of Petrarch upon the Elizabethan Sonnet.* Unpublished Thesis.

[2] Mark Pattison, *The Sonnets of John Milton* (London, 1883).

[3] *Arber Reprints* (London, 1869), vol. 7, p. 74.

The lines are, indeed, often little better than stumbling prose. The subject is love, exercising itself in extravagant praise of bodily beauty, and profuse complaint at the fair one's unreasoning coldness and indifference. In his other poetry, Wyatt can be simple and sincere, but in the sonnets he is usually paraphrasing, or attempting to translate directly, the work of Petrarch, and with difficulty endeavoring to maintain the emotional fervor of his master. Surrey, dealing generally with the same personal themes, is more musical, has a better command of line, a more graceful and pleasing diction. The work of these poets, done between 1530 and 1540, was not published until 1557, in *Tottel's Miscellany*. This book appears to have been popular, but, strange to say, few poets sought to imitate the new form of verse.

At this time in France a group of writers, calling themselves the *Pleiade*, under the leadership of Ronsard and Du Bellay, set about vigorously the complete reformation of French literature. Their assertion was that French, being crude in thought and form, could be elevated only by an imitation of Greek, Latin, and Italian models; hence one of the favorite tasks of these poets was the translation, paraphrase, or imitation of the Italian sonnets, especially those written by Petrarch. This work, carried on with vigor from about 1550 to the death of Ronsard in 1584, had a great influence in England, where the educated read chiefly French books.

English thought, under the stimulus of French enthusiasm, turned again to Italy, and the sonnet soon became the popular form in England. Each of the poets, there being so many of them that Ben Jonson says the name of poet became a term of contempt, tried his hand at it. He not only wrote one or a dozen, but he generally composed a sequence of a hundred or a list approaching that perfect number. Thousands upon thousands of sonnets were written, almost always on the subject of love, the poets seeking, either servilely or reverently, to follow in the footsteps of Petrarch. They succeeded, however, in most cases, in reproducing only the extravagant love-praise and suffering, but failed to attain

the beauty of language and sincerity of emotion that made Petrarch's sonnets live. Yet there is a fascination about the wailing sorrows and the glowing praises of Lodge for Phillis, Fletcher for Licia, Daniel for Delia, Percy for Coelia, Drayton for Idea, Griffin for Fidessa, Smith for Chloris, Sidney for Stella, and Spenser for his "soverayne saynt." The world seems very young, very fresh, and full of harmless feeling for beauty and love. One somehow senses the beauty as real and discounts the pain as only a means of enhancing the loveliness. The sonnets range in poetic grace and emotional sincerity from the happiest creations of Sidney and Spenser to the half-indifferent exercises of Drayton or the banalities of Smith and Griffin. They are, to be sure, in most cases only paraphrases of Petrarch or his French imitators, — this Sidney Lee has clearly shown us, — nevertheless, we like the poets who follow so ardently, as a child his toy, their ideal of shining eyes and glowing cheeks.

Shakespeare writes, too, a sequence of sonnets, and he is of and not of this group of lovers who praise and blame their mistresses. Despite all the attempts to find the lady or friend, or both, of his sonnets, the mystery of their meaning has never been satisfactorily solved, yet it is clear that Shakespeare does the same thing his contemporaries are doing, only he does it superlatively well, with far greater power of thought, delicacy of sentiment, and sweetness of music. But the number of really great sonnets from his pen is small; the faults of the time in repetition, involved sentences, and extravagant emotion, mar the most of his sonnets. His best are among the best of all literature, yet they are comparatively few in number.

With the beginning of the seventeenth century the sonneteering vogue had somewhat spent its force, and Puritanism began to frown more sternly upon all such idle vanities as praise of ladies' beauty. William Drummond, "the Scottish Petrarch" and disciple of Spenser, writes sonnets to his lady which are free from glorification of physical charm and full of that which the Puritan sanctioned, religious melancholy and prayer for resignation. They are simpler in language,

with fewer elaborate figures, and less repetition than have the earlier sonnets; they lack, however, freshness and vigor of imagination. Milton, a little later, takes time from the strenuous business of state to write now and then a sonnet. His sonnets begin in English a new type, a new standard of fashioning this difficult poem. With one exception, each stands by itself, unconnected with those that precede or follow, and only one deals with that favorite subject of love. Milton uses the sonnet for expressing his thought regarding people or events, as a way of estimating character, praising deeds, or seeking to stimulate men to action. He combines this freer scope of subject-matter with great simplicity of structure and diction, composing his sonnets without adornment and his sentences to read almost as clearly as prose. Like Shakespeare, however, Milton writes few of the highest quality, not because of imperfect form or faulty subject-matter, but because he is in only a few cases so deeply moved by his theme that emotion makes the lines glow with a compelling vividness and beauty. Before Milton, the sonnet had been sometimes dignified, occasionally simple and sincere, in many cases passionate; yet rarely before his work had these qualities been combined in the same sonnet.

The eighteenth century found its mode of expression in the freer ode, the satire, the more pointed epigram, and the elegy. Very few essayed the sonnet and still fewer, as Cowper in one instance, succeeded in writing sonnets of worth. Gray in 1742 wrote his one sonnet, formal, artificial, correct, and classical. Thomas Warton wrote nine; not one of which attains anything like the simplicity we find in Milton, or the grace by which Spenser delights us. It is not until 1789, when William Lisles Bowles published his little book of fourteen sonnets, that the sonnet becomes again the medium through which the poet speaks simply and plainly his individual thoughts and emotions. Bowles followed Milton's practice in avoiding love-themes and in making each sonnet a unit by itself. Coleridge was enthusiastic over the work of this author, beginning his own sonnet with "My heart has thank'd thee, Bowles," and again remarking, "Surely never

was a writer so equal in excellence."[1] This praise did much to make these sonnets known and read.

It was, however, Wordsworth who re-created and re-dignified the sonnet; he loved and defended it against its detractors, using it separately and in sequence for the expression of philosophy, religion, social reform, nature, friendship, and the common events of family life. Like Milton, he gives the sentence structure the simplicity and directness of prose, and at his best develops the thought within the rigid bounds of the sonnet as easily and naturally as in conversation. Most writers since have striven for this ideal, which lets the thought reveal itself without the obvious show of complexly unrolling phrases. Wordsworth, in his defense and his practice, assured the acceptance of the sonnet by the Romantic School, with which begins its renaissance and its popularity among modern poets. These two writers, Milton and Wordsworth, so stamped the sonnet that in manner it has changed little since, only gaining new poetic fervor with Keats and Rossetti and Mrs. Browning; in subject, it has become possibly more flexible, lending itself equally as well to the old subject of intimate love as to that of the impersonal criticism of church and state, and to themes all the way between these two.

[1] *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Macmillan & Company, 1895), p. 40.

ENGLISH SONNETS

THE DESERTED LOVER CONSOLETH HIMSELF

Divers doth use, as I have heard and know,
When that to change their ladies do begin,
To mourn, and wail, and never for to lynn;
Hoping thereby to 'pease their painful woe.
And some there be that when it chanceth so
That women change, and hate where love hath been,
They call them false, and think with words to win
The hearts of them which otherwhere doth grow.
But as for me, though that by chance indeed
Change hath outworn the favour that I had,
I will not wail, lament, nor yet be sad,
Nor call her false that falsely did me feed;
But let it pass, and think it is of kind
That often change doth please a woman's mind.

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503?–1542).

THE LOVER DESPAIRING TO ATTAIN

Whoso list to hunt? I know where is an hind!
But as for me, alas! I may no more,
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore;
I am of them that furthest come behind.
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
Draw from the deer; but as she fleeth afore
Fainting I follow; I leave off therefore,
Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.
Who list to hunt, I put him out of doubt
As well as I, may spend his time in vain!
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written her fair neck round about;
"Noli me tangere; for Cæsar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame."

Sir Thomas Wyatt.

A VOW TO LOVE FAITHFULLY

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice;
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen;
In presence prest of people, mad or wise;
Set me in high, or yet in low degree;
In longest night, or in the shortest day;
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be;
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray:
Set me in heav'n, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, alive whereso I dwell,
Sick, or in health, in evil fame, or good,
Hers will I be; and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought.

Earl of Surrey (*1517?–1547*).

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale.
The nightingale with feathers new she sings:
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;
The fishes flete with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

Earl of Surrey.

AMORETTI

XXII

This holy season, fit to fast and pray,
Men to devotion ought to be inclined:
Therefore, I likewise, on so holy day,
For my sweet Saint some service fit will find.
Her temple fair is built within my mind,
In which her glorious image placèd is;
On which my thoughts do day and night attend,
Like sacred priests that never think amiss!
There I to her, as th' author of my bliss,
Will build an altar to appease her ire;
And on the same my heart will sacrifice,
Burning in flames of pure and chaste desire:
The which vouchsafe, O goddess, to accept,
Among thy dearest relics to be kept.

Edmund Spenser (1552 ?–1599).

XL

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheer,
And tell me whereto can ye liken it;
When on each eyelid sweetly do appear
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Likest it seemeth, in my simple wit,
Unto the fair sunshine in summer's day;
That, when a dreadful storm away is flit,
Through the broad world doth spread his goodly ray;
At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
And every beast that to his den was fled,
Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
And to the light lift up their drooping head.
So my storm-beaten heart likewise is cheered
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are cleared.

Edmund Spenser.

LXVII

Like as a huntsman after weary chase,
Seeing the game from him escaped away,
Sits down to rest him in some shady place,
With panting hounds beguilèd of their prey:
So, after long pursuit and vain assay,
When I all weary had the chase forsook,
The gentle deer returned the self-same way,
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brook:
There she, beholding me with milder look,
Sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide;
Till I in hand her yet half trembling took,
And with her own good will her firmly tied.
Strange thing, me seemed, to see a beast so wild,
So goodly won, with her own will beguiled.

Edmund Spenser.

LXVIII

Most glorious Lord of life! that, on this day,
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin;
And, having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die,
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live forever in felicity;
And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love thee for the same again;
And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertain!
So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought:
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

Edmund Spenser.

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves, and washèd it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand;
But came the tide, and made my pains his pray.
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain essay
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wipèd out likewise."
"Not so," quod I; "let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

Edmund Spenser.

A VISION UPON THE CONCEIT OF THE FAERY QUEEN

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that Temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair love, and fairer virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen:
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,
And from thenceforth those graces were not seen;
For they this Queen attended, in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce:
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And cursed the access of that celestial thief.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552?–1618).

XXXI

With how sad steps, O Moon! thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks: thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess? —
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586).

XXXIX

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Sir Philip Sidney.

XLI

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on; and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Sir Philip Sidney.

LEAVE ME, O LOVE, WHICH REACHEST BUT TO DUST

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
Oh, take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

Sir Philip Sidney.

PHILLIS

XXII

Fair art thou, Phillis, ay, so fair, sweet maid,
As nor the sun, nor I have seen more fair;
For in thy cheeks sweet roses are embayed,
And gold more pure than gold doth gild thy hair.
Sweet bees have hived their honey on thy tongue,
And Hebe spiced her nectar with thy breath;
About thy neck do all the graces throng,
And lay such baits as might entangle death.
In such a breast what heart would not be thrall?
From such sweet arms who would not wish embraces?
At thy fair hands who wonders not at all
Wonder itself through ignorance embases?
Yet natheless though wondrous gifts you call these,
My faith is far more wonderful than all these.

Thomas Lodge (1558?–1625).

WHAT MEANT THE POETS IN INVECTIVE VERSE

What meant the poets in invective verse
To sing Medea's shame, and Scylla's pride,
Calypso's charms by which so many died?
Only for this their vices they rehearse;
That curious wits which in the world converse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shows
Of such false Sirens, those home-breeding foes,
That from their eyes their venom do disperse.
So soon kills not the basilisk with sight;
The viper's tooth is not so venomous;
The adder's tongue not half so dangerous,
As they that bear the shadow of delight,
Who chain blind youths in trammels of their hair,
Till waste brings woe, and sorrow hastes despair.

Robert Greene (1560?–1592).

DIANA

IX

My lady's presence makes the Roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame.
The Lily's leaves, for envy, pale became;
And her white hands in them this envy bred.
The Marigold abroad her leaves doth spread,
Because the sun's and her power is the same.
The Violet of purple colour came,
Dyed with the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take;
From her sweet breath, their sweet smells do proceed;
The living heat which her eye-beams do make
Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed.
The rain wherewith she watereth these flowers,
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers.

Henry Constable (*1562–1613*).

DELIA

L

Beauty, sweet Love, is like the morning dew,
Whose short refresh upon the tender green
Cheers for a time but till the sun doth shew,
And straight 't is gone as it had never been.
Soon doth it fade that makes the fairest flourish,
Short is the glory of the blushing rose;
The hue which thou so carefully dost nourish,
Yet which at length thou must be forced to lose.
When thou, surcharged with burthen of thy years,
Shalt bend thy wrinkles homeward to the earth,
And that in Beauty's lease, expired, appears
The date of Age, the calends of our death, —
But ah, no more! — this must not be foretold,
For women grieve to think they must be old.

Samuel Daniel (*1562–1619*).

CARE-CHARMER SLEEP, SON OF THE SABLE NIGHT

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of the day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising Sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

Samuel Daniel.

WERE I AS BASE AS IS THE LOWLY PLAIN

Were I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my Love, as high as heaven above,
Yet should the thoughts of me your humble swain
Ascend to heaven in honour of my Love.
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my Love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,
Whereso'er you were, with you my love should go.
Were you the earth, dear Love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind, and till the world were done.
Whereso'er I am, below or else above you,
Whereso'er you are, my heart shall truly love you.

Joshuah Sylvester (1563–1618).

IDEA

IV

Bright Star of Beauty! on whose Eyelids sit
A thousand nymph-like and enamoured Graces,
The Goddesses of Memory and Wit,
Which there in order take their several places.
In whose dear Bosom, sweet delicious Love
Lays down his quiver, which he once did bear,
Since he that blessèd Paradise did prove,
And leaves his mother's lap to sport him there.
Let others strive to entertain with words!
My soul is of a braver metal made:
I hold that vile which vulgar wit affords,
In me 's that faith which Time cannot invade!
Let what I praise be still made good by you
Be you most worthy, whilst I am most true.

Michael Drayton (1563–1631).

LXXI

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part, —
Nay I have done, you get no more of me:
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free:
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes, —
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mighst him yet recover!

Michael Drayton.

SONNETS

XVIII

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long this lives, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare (*1564–1616*).

XXIX

WHEN, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

William Shakespeare.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

William Shakespeare.

XXXIII

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

William Shakespeare.

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme?
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

William Shakespeare.

LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

William Shakespeare.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

William Shakespeare.

XCVIII

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

William Shakespeare.

CII

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

William Shakespeare.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

William Shakespeare.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

William Shakespeare.

CXXIX

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

William Shakespeare.

AH, SWEET CONTENT! WHERE IS THY MILD ABODE?

Ah, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?
Is it with Shepherds and light-hearted Swains,
Which sing upon the downs, and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content! where dost thou safely rest?
In heaven, with angels? which the praises sing
Of Him that made, and rules at His behest,
The minds and hearts of every living thing.
Ah, sweet Content! where doth thine harbour hold?
Is it in churches with religious men,
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?
Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,
Be where thou wilt, thou will not harbour here!

Barnabe Barnes (*1569?–1609*).

AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS BLOW

At the round earth's imagined corners blow
Your trumpets, Angels, and arise, arise,
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
All whom the Flood did, and Fire shall, o'erthrow,
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance, hath slain, and you whose eyes
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space;
For, if above all these, my sins abound
'T is late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground
Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
As if Thou'dst sealed my pardon with thy blood.

John Donne (*1573–1631*).

DEATH, BE NOT PROUD, THOUGH SOME HAVE CALLED THEE

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee, much more must flow:
And soonest our best men do with thee go;
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery!
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, Kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charmes can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

John Donne.

I KNOW THAT ALL BENEATH THE MOON DECAYS

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought,
In Time's great periods shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days;
I know how all the Muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of spright which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought,
And that nought lighter is than airy praise;
I know frail beauty's like the purple flower,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords;
That love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will invasal reason's power:
Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
But that, O me! I both must write and love.

William Drummond (1585–1649).

DEAR WOOD, AND YOU, SWEET SOLITARY PLACE

Dear wood, and you, sweet solitary place,
Where from the vulgar I estrangèd live,
Contented more with what your shades me give,
Than if I had what Thetis doth embrace;
What snaky eye, grown jealous of my peace,
Now from your silent horrors would me drive,
When Sun, progressing in his glorious race
Beyond the Twins, doth near our pole arrive?
What sweet delight a quiet life affords,
And what is it to be of bondage free,
Far from the madding worldling's hoarse discords,
Sweet flowery place I first did learn of thee:
Ah! if I were mine own, your dear resorts
I would not change with princes' stately courts.

William Drummond.

ALEXIS, HERE SHE STAYED; AMONG THESE PINES

Alexis, here she stayed; among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did alone repair;
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair,
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mines;
She set her by these muskèd eglantines,
The happy place the print seems yet to bear;
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugared lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend their ear;
Me here she first perceived, and here a morn
Of bright carnations did o'erspread her face;
Here did she sigh, here first my hopes were born,
And I first got a pledge of promised grace;
But ah! what served it to be happy so
Sith passed pleasures double but new woe?

William Drummond.

A ROSE, AS FAIR AS EVER SAW THE NORTH

A ROSE, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone:
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known.
The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learnèd bards of it their ditties made;
The nimble fairies, by the pale-faced moon,
Watered the root, and kissed her pretty shade.
But, welladay! the gardener careless grew,
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
God shield the stock! If heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

William Browne (1591–1643?).

SIN

LORD, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us: then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and strategems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,
Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,
The sound of glory ringing in our ears;
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

George Herbert (1593–1633).

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the Lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of Day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. O! if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet had'st no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

John Milton (*1608–1674*).

TO THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O, yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
For what can war but endless war still breed?
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith clear'd from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

John Milton.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

John Milton.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

Methought I saw my late espousèd saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

John Milton.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

John Milton.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. RICHARD WEST

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men:
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

Thomas Gray (*1716–1771*).

ON KING ARTHUR'S ROUND TABLE AT WINCHESTER

Where Venta's Norman castle still uprears
Its raftered hall, that o'er the grassy foss
And scattered flinty fragments clad in moss,
On yonder steep in naked state appears;
High-hung remains, the pride of warlike years,
Old Arthur's board: on the capacious round
Some British pen has sketched the names renowned,
In marks obscure, of his immortal peers.
Though joined with magic skill, with many a rime,
The Druid frame, unhonoured, falls a prey
To the slow vengeance of the wizard Time,
And fade the British characters away;
Yet Spenser's page, that chaunts in verse sublime
Those Chiefs, shall live, unconscious of decay.

Thomas Warton (*1728–1790*).

TO MRS. UNWIN

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things;
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a Book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

William Cowper (*1731–1800*).

WRITTEN AT THE CLOSE OF SPRING

The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nursed in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away.
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring:
Ah! why has happiness no second Spring?

Charlotte Smith (*1749–1806*).

OSTEND: ON HEARING THE BELLS AT SEA

How sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal!
As when, at opening dawn, the fragrant breeze
Touches the trembling sense of pale desease,
So piercing to my heart their force I feel!
And hark! with lessening cadence now they fall!
And now, along the white and level tide,
They fling their melancholy music wide;
Bidding me many a tender thought recall
Of summer days, and those delightful years
When from an ancient tower, in life's fair prime,
The mournful magic of their mingling chime
First waked my wondering childhood into tears!
But seeming now, when all those days are o'er,
The sound of joy once heard, and heard no more.

William Lisle Bowles (*1762–1850*).

O TIME! WHO KNOW'ST A LENIENT HAND TO LAY

O Time! who know'st a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly thence,
Lulling to sad repose the weary sense,
The faint pang stealest unperceived away;
On thee I rest my only hope at last,
And think, when thou hast dried the bitter tear
That flows in vain o'er all my soul held dear,
I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile; —
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient shower
Forgetful, though its wings are wet the while: —
Yet ah! how much must that poor heart endure,
Which hopes from thee, and thee alone, a cure!

William Lisle Bowles.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

William Wordsworth (*1770–1850*).

WRITTEN IN LONDON

SEPTEMBER, 1802

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! — We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

William Wordsworth.

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

William Wordsworth.

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

William Wordsworth.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US LATE AND SOON

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

William Wordsworth.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

William Wordsworth.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET; CRITIC, YOU HAVE FROWNED

Scorn not the sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

William Wordsworth.

SURPRISED BY JOY

Surprised by joy — impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport — Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind —
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss? — That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

William Wordsworth.

MOST SWEET IT IS WITH UNUPLIFTED EYES

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

William Wordsworth.

TO NATURE

It may indeed be phantasy when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, to me it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and Thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834).

A WRINKLED, CRABBÈD MAN THEY PICTURE THEE

A WRINKLED, crabbèd man they picture thee,
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as gray
As the long moss upon the apple-tree;
Blue-lipped, an ice-drop at thy sharp blue nose,
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way
Plodding along through sleet and drifting snows.
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt hearth,
Old Winter! seated in thy great arm-chair,
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth;
Or circled by them as thy lips declare
Some merry jest or tale of murder dire,
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night,
Pausing at times to rouse the mouldering fire,
Or taste the old October brown and bright.

Robert Southey (*1774–1843*).

NIGHT AND DEATH

MYSTERIOUS Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we then shun death with anxious strife!
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life?

Joseph Blanco White (*1775–1841*).

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that 's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;
Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song:
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

Leigh Hunt (*1784–1859*).

WHAT ART THOU, MIGHTY ONE! AND WHERE THY SEAT?

What art thou, Mighty One! and where thy seat?
Thou broodest on the calm that cheers the lands,
And thou dost bear within thine awful hands
The rolling thunders and the lightnings fleet;
Stern on thy dark-wrought car of cloud and wind,
Thou guid'st the northern storm at night's dead noon,
Or, on the red wing of the fierce monsoon,
Disturb'st the sleeping giant of the Ind.
In the drear silence of the polar span
Dost thou repose? or in the solitude
Of sultry tracts, where the lone caravan
Hears nightly howl the tiger's hungry brood?
Vain thought! the confines of his throne to trace,
Who glows through all the fields of boundless space!

Henry Kirke White (*1785–1806*).

ON CHILLON

Eternal spirit of the chainless Mind!
Bright in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar; for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavements were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

Lord Byron (1788–1824).

THE ROCK OF CASHEL

Royal and saintly Cashel! I would gaze
Upon the wreck of thy departed powers
Not in the dewy light of matin hours,
Nor the meridian pomp of summer's blaze,
But at the close of dim autumnal days,
When the sun's parting glance, through slanting showers,
Sheds o'er thy rock-throned battlements and towers
Such awful gleams as brighten o'er Decay's
Prophetic cheek. At such a time, methinks,
There breathes from thy lone courts and voiceless aisles
A melancholy moral; such as sinks
On the lone traveller's heart, amid the piles
Of vast Persepolis on her mountain-stand,
Or Thebes half buried in the desert sand.

Sir Aubrey de Vere (1788–1846).

SOME LAWS THERE ARE TOO SACRED FOR THE HAND

Some laws there are too sacred for the hand
Of man to approach; recorded in the blood
Of patriots; before which, as the Rood
Of Faith, devotional we take our stand.
Time-hallowed laws! magnificently planned
When Freedom was the nurse of public good,
And Power, paternal: laws that have withstood
All storms — unshaken bulwarks of the land!
Free will, frank speech, an undissembling mind,
Without which Freedom dies and laws are vain,
On such we found our rights, to such we cling:
In these shall Power her surest safeguard find.
Tread them not down in passion or disdain:
Make Man a reptile, he will turn and sting.

Sir Aubrey de Vere.

THE AFTERMATH

It was late summer, and the grass again
Had grown knee-deep, — we stood, my love and I,
Awhile in silence where the stream runs by;
Idly we listened to a plaintive strain, —
A young maid singing to her youthful swain, —
Ah me, dead days remembered make us sigh,
And tears will sometimes flow we know not why;
If spring be past, I said, *shall love remain?*
She moved aside, yet soon she answered me,
Turning her gaze responsive to mine own, —
Spring days are gone, and yet the grass, we see
Unto a goodly height again hath grown;
Dear love, just so love's aftermath may be
A richer growth than e'er spring days have known.

Samuel Waddington (1790–1812).

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear —
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Percy Bysshe Shelley (*1792–1822*).

THE RETURN TO POETRY

ONCE more the eternal melodies from far
Woo me like songs of home: once more discerning,
Through fitful clouds, the pure majestic star
Above the poet's world serenely burning,
Thither my soul, fresh-winged by love, is turning,
As o'er the waves the wood-bird seeks her nest,
For those green heights of dewy stillness yearning,
Whence glorious minds o'erlook this earth's unrest.
Now be the spirit of heaven's truth my guide
Through the bright land! — that no brief gladness, found
In passing bloom, rich odour, or sweet sound,
May lure my footsteps from their aim aside:
Their true, high quest — to seek, if ne'er to gain,
The inmost, purest shrine of that august domain.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans (*1793–1835*).

IN HILLY-WOOD

How sweet to be thus nestling deep in boughs,
Upon an ashen stoven pillowing me;
Faintly are heard the plowmen at their plows,
But not an eye can find its way to see.
The sunbeams scarce molest me with a smile,
So thick the leafy armies gather round;
But where they do, the breeze blows cool the while,
Their leafy shadows dancing on the ground.
Full many a flower, too, wishing to be seen,
Perks up its head the hiding grass between, —
In mid-wood silence, thus, how sweet to be;
Where all the noises, that on peace intrude,
Come from the chittering cricket, bird, and bee,
Whose songs have charms to sweeten solitude.

John Clare (*1793–1864*).

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

John Keats (*1795–1821*).

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT

To one who has been long in city pent,
'T is very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven, — to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by,
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

John Keats.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's — he takes the lead
In summer luxury, — he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

John Keats.

TO SLEEP

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embower'd from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

John Keats.

BRIGHT STAR, WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART!

BRIGHT star, would I were steadfast as thou art!
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:
No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still, to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

John Keats.

IF I HAVE SINNED IN ACT, I MAY REPENT

If I have sinned in act, I may repent;
If I have erred in thought, I may disclaim
My silent error, and yet feel no shame;
But if my soul, big with an ill intent,
Guilty in will, by fate be innocent,
Or being bad, yet murmurs at the curse
And incapacity of being worse,
That makes my hungry passion still keep Lent
In keen expectance of a Carnival, —
Where, in all worlds, that round the sun revolve
And shed their influence on this passive ball,
Abides a power that can my soul absolve?
Could any sin survive, and be forgiven,
One sinful wish would make a hell of heaven.

Hartley Coleridge (1796–1849).

WHAT WAS'T AWAKENED FIRST THE UNTRIED EAR

What was't awakened first the untried ear
Of that sole man who was all human kind?
Was it the gladsome welcome of the wind,
Stirring the leaves that never yet were sere?
The four mellifluous streams that flowed so near,
Their lulling murmurs all in one combined?
The note of bird unnamed? The startled hind
Bursting the brake — in wonder, not in fear,
Of her new lord? Or did the holy ground
Send forth mysterious melody to greet
The gracious pressure of immaculate feet?
Did viewless seraphs rustle all around,
Making sweet music out of air as sweet?
Or his own voice awake him with its sound?

Hartley Coleridge.

SILENCE

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave — under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hushed — no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood (1799–1845).

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW

THEY do but grope in learning's pedant round
Who on the phantasies of sense bestow
An idol substance, bidding us bow low
Before those shades of being which are found,
Stirring or still, on man's brief trial-ground;
As if such shapes and modes, which come and go,
Had aught of Truth or Life in their poor show,
To sway or judge, and skill to sain or wound.
Son of immortal seed, high-destined Man!
Know thy dread gift, — a creature, yet a cause:
Each mind is its own centre, and it draws
Home to itself, and moulds in its thought's span,
All outward things, the vassals of its will,
Aided by Heaven, by earth unthwarted still.

Cardinal Newman (1801–1890).

HIDDEN JOYS

Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem,
There's not a leaf that falls upon the ground,
But holds some joy, of silence, or of sound;
Some sprite begotten of a summer dream.
The very meanest things are made supreme
With innate ecstasy. No grain of sand
But moves a bright and million peopled land,
And hath its Edens and its Eves, I deem.
For Love, though blind himself, a curious eye
Hath lent me, to behold the hearts of things,
And touched mine ear with power. Thus, far or nigh,
Minute or mighty, fixed, or free with wings,
Delight from many a nameless covert sly
Peeps sparkling, and in tones familiar sings.

Samuel Laman Blanchard (1804–1845).

NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wished to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882).

HOLIDAYS

THE holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows: —
The happy days unclouded to their close;
The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes; swift desires that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that blows!
White as the gleam of a receding sail,
White as a cloud that floats and fades in air,
White as the whitest lily on the stream,
These tender memories are; — a fairy tale
Of some enchanted land we know not where,
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

DIVINA COMMEDIA

I

OFT have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

III

I ENTER, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

A WRETCHED THING IT WERE, TO HAVE OUR HEART

A WRETCHED thing it were, to have our heart
Like a broad highway or a populous street,
Where every idle thought has leave to meet,
Pause, or pass on, as in an open mart;
Or like some road-side pool, which no nice art
Has guarded that the cattle may not beat
And foul it with a multitude of feet,
Till of the heavens it can give back no part.
But keep thou thine a holy solitude,
For He, who would walk there, would walk alone;
He who would drink there, must be first endued
With single right to call that stream his own;
Keep thou thine heart close-fastened, unrevealed,
A fenced garden and a fountain sealed.

Archbishop Trench (1807–1886).

TO LEAVE UNSEEN SO MANY A GLORIOUS SIGHT

To leave unseen so many a glorious sight,
To leave so many lands unvisited,
To leave so many worthiest books unread,
Unrealized so many visions bright;
Oh! wretched yet inevitable spite
Of our brief span, that we must yield our breath,
And wrap us in the unfeeling coil of death,
So much remaining of unproved delight.
But hush, my soul, and vain regrets, be stilled;
Find rest in Him who is the complement
Of whatsoe'er transcends our mortal doom,
Of baffled hope and unfulfilled intent:
In the clear vision and aspect of whom
All longings and all hopes shall be fulfilled.

Archbishop Trench.

THE OCEAN

The Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon,
For ever changes with his restless tide;
Flung shoreward now, to be regathered soon
With kingly pauses of reluctant pride,
And semblance of return. Anon from home
He issues forth again, high ridged and free,
The seething hiss of his tumultuous foam
Like armies whispering where great echoes be!
Oh! leave me here upon this beach to rove,
Mute listener to that sound so grand and lone —
A glorious sound, deep-drawn and strongly thrown,
And reaching those on mountain heights above;
To British ears, as who shall scorn to own,
A tutelar fond voice, a Saviour-tone of love!

Charles Tennyson-Turner (1808–1879).

THE BUOY-BELL

How like the leper, with his own sad cry
Enforcing his own solitude, it tolls!
That lonely bell set in the rushing shoals,
To warn us from the place of jeopardy!
O friend of man! sore-vexed by Ocean's power,
The changing tides wash o'er thee day by day;
Thy trembling mouth is filled with bitter spray,
Yet still thou ringest on from hour to hour;
High is thy mission, though thy lot is wild —
To be in danger's realm a guardian sound;
In seamen's dreams a pleasant part to bear,
And earn their blessing as the year goes round;
And strike the key-note of each grateful prayer,
Breathed in their distant homes by wife or child!

Charles Tennyson-Turner.

THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE

As on my bed at dawn I mused and prayed,
I saw my lattice pranked upon the wall,
The flaunting leaves and flitting birds withal —
A sunny phantom interlaced with shade;
"Thanks be to heaven!" in happy mood I said,
"What sweeter aid my matins could befall
Than this fair glory from the East hath made?
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,
To bid us feel and see! we are not free
To say we see not, for the glory comes
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea;
His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms;
And, at prime hour, behold! He follows me
With golden shadows to my secret rooms!

Charles Tennyson-Turner.

TO SCIENCE

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who would'st not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849).

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION

With stammering lips and insufficient sound,
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air:
But if I did it, — as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1809–1861).

COMFORT

Speak low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so
Who art not missed by any that entreat.
Speak to me as to Mary at thy feet!
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,
Let my tears drop like amber while I go
In reach of Thy divinest voice complete
In humanest affection — thus, in sooth,
To lose the sense of losing. As a child,
Whose song-bird seeks the wood forevermore,
Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth
Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore —
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within mine eyes the tears of two.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile — her look — her way
Of speaking gently, — for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day:" —
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee, — and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry, —
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point, — what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd, — where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
Against the Turk, whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892).

WRITTEN IN EDINBURGH

EVEN thus, methinks, a city reared should be,
Yea, an imperial city, that might hold
Five times a hundred noble towns in fee,
And either with their might of Babel old,
Or the rich Roman pomp of empery
Might stand compare, highest in arts enrolled,
Highest in arms; brave tenement for the free,
Who never couch to thrones, or sin for gold.
Thus should her towers be raised — with vicinage
Of clear bold hills, that curve her very streets,
As if to vindicate 'mid choicest seats
Of art, abiding Nature's majesty;
And the broad sea beyond, in calm or rage
Chainless alike, and teaching Liberty.

Arthur Henry Hallam (1811–1833).

PARTED LOVE

Methinks I have passed through some dreadful door,
Shutting off summer and its sunniest glades
From a dark waste of marsh and ruinous shades:
And in that sunlit past, one day before
All other days is crimson to the core;
That day of days when hand in hand became
Encircling arms, and with an effluent flame
Of terrible surprise, we knew love's lore.
The rose-red ear that then my hand caressed,
Those smiles bewildered, that low voice so sweet,
The truant threads of silk about the brow
Dishevelled, when our burning lips were pressed
Together, and the temple-pulses beat!
All gone now — where am I, and where art thou?

William Bell Scott (1811–1890).

THE UNIVERSE VOID

Revolving worlds, revolving systems, yea,
Revolving firmaments, nor there we end:
Systems of firmaments revolving, send
Our thought across the Infinite astray,
Gasping and lost and terrified, the day
Of life, the goodly interests of home,
Shrivelled to nothing; that unbounded dome
Pealing still on, in blind fatality.
No rest is there for our soul's wingèd feet,
She must return for shelter to her ark —
The body, fair, frail, death-born, incomplete,
And let her bring this truth back from the dark:
Life is self-centred, man is nature's god;
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.

William Bell Scott.

THE HUMAN FLOWER

In the old void of unrecorded time,
In long, slow æons of the voiceless past,
A seed from out the weltering fire-mist cast,
Took root — a struggling plant that from its prime
Through rudiments uncouth, through rock and slime,
Grew, changing form and issue — and clinging fast,
Stretched its aspiring tendrils till at last
Shaped like a spirit it began to climb
Beyond its rugged stem, with leaf and bud
Still burgeoning to greet the sunlit air
That clothed its regal top with love and power,
And compassed it as with a heavenly flood —
Until it burst in boom beyond compare,
The world's consummate, peerless human flower.

Christopher P. Cranch (1813–1892).

AGED CITIES

I have known cities with the strong-armed Rhine
Clasping their mouldering quays in lordly sweep;
And lingered where the Marne's low waters shine
Through Tyrian Frankfort; and been fain to weep
'Mid the green cliffs where pale Mosella laves
That Roman sepulchre, imperial Treves.
Ghent boasts her street, and Bruges her moonlight square;
And holy Mechlin, Rome of Flanders, stands,
Like a queen mother, on her spacious lands;
And Antwerp shoots her glowing spire in air.
Yet have I seen no place, by inland brook,
Hill-top, or plain, or trim arcaded bowers,
That carries age so nobly in its look,
As Oxford with the sun upon its towers.

Frederick William Faber (1814–1863).

TO A FLOWER ON THE SKIRTS OF MONT BLANC

With heart not yet half-rested from Mont Blanc,
O'er thee, small flower, my wearied eyes I bent,
And rested on that humbler vision long.
Is there less beauty in thy purple tent
Outspread, perchance a boundless firmament
O'er viewless myriads which beneath thee throng,
Than in that mount whose sides, with ruin hung,
Frown o'er black glens and gorges thunder-rent?
Is there less mystery? Wisely if we ponder,
Thine is the mightier marvel. Life in thee
Is strong as in cherubic wings that wander,
Seeking the limits of Infinity; —
Life, life to be transmitted, not to expire
Till yonder snowy vault shall melt in fire.

Aubrey de Vere the Younger (1814–1902).

THE SUN-GOD

I saw the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright;
An Archer of immeasurable might:
On his left shoulder hung his quivered load;
Spurned by his Steeds the eastern mountains glowed;
Forward his eager eye, and brow of light
He bent; and, while both hands that arch embowed,
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying Night.
No wings profaned that god-like form: around
His neck high-held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening: while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring, that th' ethereal dome
Thrilled as a dew drop; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.

Aubrey de Vere the Younger.

THOUGH TO THE VILEST THINGS BENEATH THE MOON [1]

THOUGH to the vilest things beneath the moon
For poor Ease' sake I give away my heart,
And for the moment's sympathy let part
My sense and sight of truth, Thy precious boon,
My painful earnings, lost, all lost, as soon
Almost as gained; and though aside I start,
Belie Thee daily, hourly, — still Thou art,
Art surely as in heaven the sun at noon;
How much so e'er I sin, what e'er I do
Of evil, still the sky above is blue,
The stars look down in beauty as before:
It is enough to walk as best we may,
To walk, and, sighing, dream of that blest day
When ill we cannot quell shall be no more.

Arthur Hugh Clough (*1819–1861*).

LOVE

OUR love is not a fading, earthly flower:
Its wingèd seed dropped down from Paradise,
And, nursed by day and night, by sun and shower,
Doth momently to fresher beauty rise.
To us the leafless autumn is not bare,
Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty green:
Our summer hearts make summer's fulness where
No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:
For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie;
Love — whose forgetfulness is beauty's death,
Whose mystic key these cells of Thou and I
Into the infinite freedom openeth,
And makes the body's dark and narrow grate
The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's palace-gate.

James Russell Lowell (*1819–1891*).

[1] Reprinted from *Poems*, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING [1]

HAPLY some Rajah first in ages gone
Amid his languid ladies finger'd thee,
While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,
Sang his one wife, love's passionate orison:
Haply thou mayst have pleased old Prester John
Among his pastures, when full royally
He sat in tent — grave shepherds at his knee —
While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.
What dost thou here? Thy masters are all dead.
My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain
At sight of thee, O king that hast a crown
Outlasting theirs, and tells of greatness fled
Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain
And murmur of the dark majestic town.

Jean Ingelow (1820–1897).

"TIMOR MORTIS CONTURBAT ME"

COULD I have sung one Song that should survive
The singer's voice, and in my country's heart
Find loving echo — evermore a part
Of all her sweetest memories; could I give
One great Thought to the People, that should prove
The spring of noble action in their hour
Of darkness, or control their headlong power
With the firm reins of Justice and of Love;
Could I have traced one Form that should express
The sacred mystery that underlies
All Beauty, and through man's enraptured eyes
Teach him how beautiful is Holiness, —
I had not feared thee. But to yield my breath,
Life's Purpose unfulfilled! — This is thy sting, O Death!

Sir Noel Paton (1821–1901).

[1] Reprinted from *Complete Poems*, by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

IMMORTALITY [1]

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, *Patience! in another life*, we say,
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne!
And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor routed leavings? or will they,
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn?
No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun!
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing — only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888).

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask — Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of Mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguess'd at. — Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

Matthew Arnold.

[1] The two sonnets by Matthew Arnold are reprinted from his *Poetical Works*, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

LIKE A MUSICIAN THAT WITH FLYING FINGER

Like a musician that with flying finger
Startles the voice of some new instrument,
And, though he knew that in one string are blent
All its extremes of sound, yet still doth linger
Among the lighter threads, fearing to start
The deep soul of that one melodious wire,
Lest it, unanswering, dash his high desire,
And spoil the hopes of his expectant heart; —
Thus, with my mistress oft conversing, I
Stir every lighter theme with careless voice,
Gathering sweet music and celestial joys
From the harmonious soul o'er which I fly;
Yet o'er the one deep master-chord I hover,
And dare not stoop, fearing to tell — I love her.

William Caldwell Roscoe (1823–1859).

THE BUBBLE OF THE SILVER SPRINGING WAVES

The bubble of the silver-springing waves,
Castalian music, and that flattering sound,
Low rustling of the loved Apollian leaves,
With which my youthful hair was to be crowned,
Grow dimmer in my ears; while Beauty grieves
Over her votary, less frequent found;
And, not untouched by stormes, my life-boat heaves
Through the splashed ocean-waters, outward bound.
And as the leaning mariner, his hand
Clasped on his ear, strives trembling to reclaim
Some loved lost echo from the fleeting strand,
So lean I back to the poetic land;
And in my heart a sound, a voice, a name
Hangs, as above the lamp hangs the expiring flame.

William Caldwell Roscoe.

THE ARMY SURGEON

Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,
He labours through the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No sweet parental office, sink away
With helpless chirp of woe, so, as he goes,
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.

Sydney Dobell (1824–1874).

HOME: IN WAR TIME

She turned the fair page with her fairer hand —
More fair and frail than it was wont to be;
O'er each remembered thing he loved to see
She lingered, and as with fairy's wand
Enchanted it to order. Oft she fanned
New motes into the sun; and as a bee
Sings through a brake of bells, so murmured she,
And so her patient love did understand
The reliquary room. Upon the sill
She fed his favorite bird. "Ah, Robin, sing!
He loves thee." Then she touches a sweet string
Of soft recall, and towards the Eastern hill
Smiles all her soul — for him who cannot hear
The raven croaking at his carrion ear.

Sydney Dobell.

O MIGHTY Mother, hearken! for thy foes
Gather round thee, and exulting cry
That thine old strength is gone and thou must die,
Pointing with fierce rejoicing to thy woes.
And is it so? The raging whirlwind blows
No stronger now than it has done of yore:
Rebellion, strife, and sin have been before;
The same companions whom thy Master chose.
We too rejoice: we know thy might is more
When to the world thy glory seemeth dim;
Nor can Hell's gates prevail to conquer Thee,
Who hearest over all the voice of Him
Who chose thy first and greatest Prince should be
A fisher on the Lake of Galilee.

Adelaide A. Procter (1825–1864).

DARKNESS[1]

COME, blessèd Darkness, come, and bring thy balm
For eyes grown weary of the garish Day!
Come with thy soft, slow steps, thy garments gray,
Thy veiling shadows, bearing in thy palm
The poppy-seeds of slumber, deep and calm!
Come with thy patient stars, whose far-off ray
Steals the hot fever of the soul away,
Thy stillness sweeter than a chanted psalm!
O blessed Darkness, Day indeed is fair,
And Light is dear when summer days are long,
And one by one the harvesters go by;
But so is rest sweet, and surcease from care,
And folded palms, and hush of evensong,
And all the unfathomed silence of the sky!

Julia C. R. Dorr (1825–1913).

[1] Reprinted from *Poems*, by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

TO A MOTH THAT DRINKETH OF THE RIPE OCTOBER

A MOTH belated, — sun and zephyr-kist, —
Trembling about a pale arbutus bell,
Probing to wildering depths its honeyed cell, —
A noonday thief, a downy sensualist!
Not vainly, sprite, thou drawest careless breath,
Strikest ambrosia from the cool-cupped flowers,
And flutterest through the soft, uncounted hours,
To drop at last in unawaited death; —
'T is something to be glad! and those fine thrills
Which move thee, to my lip have drawn the smile
Wherewith we look on joy. Drink! drown thine ills,
If ill have any part in thee; erewhile
May the pent force — thy bounded life — set free,
Fill larger sphere with equal ecstasy!

Emily Pfeiffer (1827–1890).

TO NATURE

BLIND Cyclops, hurling stones of destiny,
And not in fury! — working bootless ill,
In mere vacuity of mind and will —
Man's soul revolts against thy work and thee!
Slaves of a despot, conscienceless and *nil*,
Slaves, by mad chance befooled to think them free,
We still might rise, and with one heart agree
To mar the ruthless grinding of thy mill!
Dead tyrant, tho' our cries and groans pass by thee,
Man, cutting off from each new "tree of life"
Himself, its fatal flower, could still defy thee,
In waging on thy work eternal strife, —
The races come and coming evermore,
Heaping with hecatombs thy dead-sea shore.

Emily Pfeiffer.

AD MATREM

March 13, 1862

Oft in the after-days, when thou and I
Have fallen from the cope of human view,
When, both together, under the sweet sky
We sleep beneath the daisies and the dew,
Men will recall thy gracious presence bland,
Conning the pictured sweetness of thy face;
Will pore o'er paintings by thy plastic hand,
And vaunt thy skill, and tell thy deeds of grace.
Oh may they then, who crown thee with true bays,
Saying, "What love unto her son she bore!"
Make this addition to thy perfect praise,
"Nor ever yet was mother worshipped more!"
So shall I live with thee, and thy dear fame
Shall link my love unto thine honoured name.

Julian Henry Fane (1827–1870).

A SONNET IS A MOMENT'S MONUMENT[1]

A Sonnet is a moment's monument, —
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To the one deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral right or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul, — its converse to what Power 't is due: —
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve: or 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882).

[1] The eight sonnets by Dante Gabriel Rossetti are reprinted from his *Complete Poetical Works*, published by Little, Brown & Company.

LOVE SIGHT

When do I see thee most, belovèd one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours (we two alone)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring, —
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

THE DARK GLASS

Not I myself know all my love for thee:
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
And shall my sense pierce love, — the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity?
Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand, —
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call
And veriest touch of powers primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

THE SONG-THROE

By thine own tears thy song must tears beget,
O Singer! Magic mirror thou hast none
Except thy manifest heart; and save thine own
Anguish or ardor, else no amulet.
Cisterned in Pride, verse is the feathery jet
Of soulless air-flung fountains; nay, more dry
Than the Dead Sea for throats that thirst and sigh,
That song o'er which no singer's lids grew wet.
The Song-god — He the Sun-god — is no slave
Of thine: thy Hunter he, who for thy soul
Fledges his shaft: to no august control
Of thy skilled hand his quivered store he gave:
But if thy lips' loud cry leap to his smart,
The inspir'd recoil shall pierce thy brother's heart.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

THE HEART OF THE NIGHT

From child to youth; from youth to arduous man;
From lethargy to fever of the heart;
From faithful life to dream-dowered days apart;
From trust to doubt; from doubt to brink of ban; —
Thus much of change in one swift cycle ran
Till now. Alas, the soul! — how soon must she
Accept her primal immortality, —
The flesh resume its dust whence it began!
O Lord of work and peace! O Lord of life!
O Lord, the awful Lord of will! though late,
Even yet renew this soul with duteous breath:
That when the peace is garnered in from strife,
The work retrieved, the will regenerate,
This soul may see thy face, O Lord of death!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

SOUL'S BEAUTY

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee, — which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.
This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still — long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem, — the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see, —
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
"I am thyself, — what hast thou done to me?"
"And I — and I — thyself," (lo! each one saith,)
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God!
Not that the seasons totter in their walk, —
Nor that the virulent ill of act and talk
Seethes ever as a wine-press ever trod, —
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though now
Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings: — not therefore, O my God!
But because Man is parcelled out in men
To-day; because, for any wrongful blow,
No man not stricken asks, "I would be told
Why thou dost thus"; but his heart whispers then,
"He is he, I am I." By this we know
That the earth falls asunder, being old.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

INTERNAL HARMONY [1]

Assured of worthiness, we do not dread
Competitors; we rather give them hail
And greeting in the lists where we may fail:
Must, if we bear an aim beyond the head!
My betters are my masters: purely fed
By their sustainment I likewise shall scale
Some rocky steps between the mount and vale;
Meanwhile the mark I have and I will wed.
So that I draw the breath of finer air,
Station is naught, nor footways laurel-strewn,
Nor rivals tightly belted for the race.
God speed to them! My place is here or there,
My pride is that among them I have place:
And thus I keep this instrument in tune.

George Meredith (1828–1909).

[1] The three sonnets by George Meredith are reprinted from his *Works*, by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

ON THE DANGER OF WAR

Avert, High Wisdom, never vainly wooed,
This threat of War, that shows a land brain-sick.
When nations gain the pitch where rhetoric
Seems reason they are ripe for cannon's food.
Dark looms the issue though the cause be good,
But with the doubt 't is our old devil's trick.
O now the down-slope of the lunatic
Illumine lest we redden of that brood!
For not since man, in his first view of Thee,
Ascended to the heavens, giving sign
Within him of deep sky and sounded sea,
Did he unforfeiting thy laws transgress;
In peril of his blood his ears incline
To drums whose loudness is their emptiness.

George Meredith.

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Africa careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

George Meredith.

DEMOCRACY DOWNTRODDEN

How long, O Lord? — The voice is sounding still:
Not only heard beneath the altar-stone,
Not heard of John Evangelist alone
In Patmos. It doth cry aloud and will
Between the earth's end and earth's end, until
The day of the great reckoning — bone for bone,
And blood for righteous blood, and groan for groan:
Then shall it cease on the air with a sudden thrill:
Not slowly growing fainter if the rod
Strikes here or there amid the evil throng;
Or one oppressor's hand is stayed and numbs;
Not till the vengeance that is coming comes.
For shall all hear the voice excepting God,
Or God not listen, hearing? — Lord, how long?

William Michael Rossetti (1829- ——).

THE WORLD[1]

By day she wooes me, soft, exceeding fair:
But all night as the moon so changeth she;
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy,
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she wooes me to the outer air,
Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
But through the night, a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands,
In all the naked horror of the truth,
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching
hands.
Is this a friend indeed, that I should sell
My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?

Christina G. Rossetti (1830–1894).

[1] The three sonnets by Christina G. Rossetti are reprinted from her *Poetical Works*, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

REST

O EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth,
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hush'd in and curtain'd with a blessèd dearth
Of all that irk'd her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

Christina G. Rossetti.

REMEMBER

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina G. Rossetti.

MAZZINI [1]

THAT he is dead the sons of kings are glad;
And in their beds the tyrants sounder sleep.
Now he is dead his martyrdom will reap
Late harvest of the palms it should have had
In life. Too late the tardy lands are sad.
His unclaimed crown in secret they will keep
For ages, while in chains they vainly weep,
And vainly grope to find the roads he bade
Them take. O glorious soul! there is no dearth
Of worlds. There must be many better worth
Thy presence and thy leadership than this.
No doubt, on some great sun to-day, thy birth
Is for a race, the dawn of Freedom's bliss,
Which but for thee it might for ages miss.

Helen Hunt Jackson (*1831–1885*).

THE SONNET'S VOICE

YON silvery billows breaking on the beach
Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear,
The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear
A restless lore like that the billows teach;
For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach
From its own depths, and rest within you, dear.
As, through the billowy voices yearning here
Great nature strives to find a human speech.
A sonnet is a wave of melody:
From heaving waters of the impassioned soul
A billow of tidal music one and whole
Flows in the "octave"; then returning free,
Its ebbing surges in the "sestet" roll
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

Theodore Watts-Dunton (*1832–* ——).

[1] Reprinted from *Poems*, by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

NATURA BENIGNA [1]

What power is this? What witchery wins my feet
To peaks so sheer they scorn the cloaking snow,
All silent as the emerald gulfs below,
Down whose ice-walls the wings of twilight beat?
What thrill of earth and heaven — most wild, most sweet —
What answering pulse that all the senses know,
Comes leaping from the ruddy eastern glow
Where, far away, the skies and mountains meet?
Mother, 't is I reborn: I know thee well:
That throb I know and all its prophesies,
O Mother and Queen, beneath the olden spell
Of silence, gazing from thy hills and skies!
Dumb Mother, struggling with the years to tell
The secret at thy heart through helpless eyes.

Theodore Watts-Dunton.

A DREAM

Beneath the loveliest dream there coils a fear:
Last night came she whose eyes are memories now;
Her far-off gaze seemed all forgetful how
Love dimmed them once, so calm they shone and clear.
"Sorrow," I said, "has made me old, my dear;
'T is I, indeed, but grief can change the brow:
Beneath *my* load a seraph's neck might bow,
Vigils like mine would blanch an angel's hair."
Oh, then I saw, I saw the sweet lips move!
I saw the love-mists thickening in her eyes —
I heard a sound as if a murmuring dove
Felt lonely in the dells of Paradise;
But when upon my neck she fell, my love,
Her hair smelt sweet of whin and woodland spice.

Theodore Watts-Dunton.

[1] The three following sonnets by Theodore Watts-Dunton are reprinted from *The Coming of Love*, by permission of the publishers, John Lane Company.

IN A GRAVEYARD

Oliver Madox Brown

November 12, 1874

Farewell to thee, and to our dreams farewell —
Dreams of high deeds and golden days of thine,
Where once again should Art's twin powers combine —
The painter's wizard-wand, the poet's spell!
Though Death strikes free, careless of Heaven and Hell —
Careless of Man, of Love's most lovely shrine;
Yet must Man speak — must ask of Heaven a sign
That this wild world is God's, and all is well.
Last night we mourned thee, cursing eyeless Death,
Who, sparing sons of Baal and Ashtoreth,
Must needs slay thee, worth all the world to slay;
But round this grave the winds of winter say:
"On earth what hath the poet? An alien breath.
Night holds the keys that ope the doors of Day."

Theodore Watts-Dunton.

DANTE [1]

Poet, whose unscarred feet have trodden Hell,
By what grim path and dread environing
Of fire couldst thou that dauntless footstep bring
And plant it firm amid the dolorous cell
Of darkness where perpetually dwell
The spirits cursed beyond imagining?
Or else is thine a visionary wing,
And all thy terror but a tale to tell?
"Neither and both, thou seeker! I have been
No wilder path than thou thyself dost go,
Close masked in an impenetrable screen,
Which having rent I gaze around, and know
What tragic wastes of gloom, before unseen,
Curtain the soul that strives and sins below.

Richard Garnett (1835–1906).

[1] The two sonnets by Richard Garnett are reprinted from *The Queen and Other Poems*, by permission of the publishers, John Lane Company.

AGE

I WILL not rail or grieve, when torpid eld
Frosts the slow-journeying blood, for I shall see
The lovelier leaves hang yellow on the tree,
The nimbler brooks in icy fetters held.
Methinks the aged eye that first beheld
The fitful ravage of December wild,
Then knew himself indeed dear Nature's child,
Seeing the common doom, that all compelled.
No kindred we to her belovèd broods,
If, dying these, we drew a selfish breath;
But one path travel all her multitudes,
And none dispute the solemn Voice that saith:
"Sun to thy setting; to your autumn, woods;
Stream to thy sea; and man unto thy death!"

Richard Garnett.

A PARABLE [1]

I LONGED for rest, and some one spoke me fair,
And proffered goodly rooms wherein to dwell,
Hung round with tapestries, and garnished well,
That I might take mine ease and pleasure there;
And there I sought a refuge from despair,
A joy that should my life's long gloom dispel;
But ominously through those fair halls there fell
Strange sounds, as of old music in the air.
As day went down, the music grew apace,
And in the moonlight saw I, white and cold,
A presence, radiant in the radiant space,
With smiling lips that never had grown old;
And then I knew the secret none had told,
And shivered there, an alien in that place.

Louise Chandler Moulton (1835–1908).

[1] Reprinted from *Poems and Sonnets*, by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

LOVE'S WISDOM [1]

Now on the summit of Love's topmost peak
Kiss we and part; no further can we go;
And better death than we from high to low
Should dwindle or decline from strong to weak.
We have found all, there is no more to seek;
All have we proved, no more is there to know;
And Time could only tutor us to eke
Out rapture's warmth with custom's afterglow.
We cannot keep at such a height as this;
For even straining souls like ours inhale
But once in life so rarefied a bliss.
What if we lingered till love's breath should fail!
Heaven of my Earth! one more celestial kiss,
Then down by separate pathways to the vale.

Alfred Austin (1835– ——).

ENGLAND

While men pay reverence to the mighty things,
They must revere thee, thou blue-cinctured isle
Of England — not to-day, but this long while
In front of nations, Mother of great kings,
Soldiers, and poets. Round thee the sea flings
Her steel bright arm, and shields thee from the guile
And hurt of France. Secure, with august smile,
Thou sittest, and the East its tribute brings.
Some say thy old-time power is on the wane,
Thy moon of grandeur, filled, contracts at length —
They see it darkening down from less to less.
Let but a hostile hand make threat again,
And they shall see thee in thy ancient strength,
Each iron sinew quivering, lioness!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907).

[1] Reprinted from *Lyrical Poems* by Alfred Austin, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

WHEN I BEHOLD WHAT PLEASURE IS PURSUIT

When I behold what pleasure is Pursuit
What life, what glorious eagerness it is;
Then mark how full Possession falls from this,
How fairer seems the blossom than the fruit, —
I am perplext, and often stricken mute,
Wondering which hath attained the higher bliss,
The wingèd insect, or the chrysalis
It thrust aside with unreluctant foot.
Spirit of verse, that still elud'st my art
Thou airy phantom that dost ever haunt me,
O never, never rest upon my heart,
If when I have thee I shall little want thee!
Still flit away in moonlight, rain, and dew,
Will-o'-the-wisp, that I may still pursue!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

TO THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON [1]

Spring speaks again, and all our woods are stirred,
And all our wide glad wastes a-flower around,
That twice have heard keen April's clarion sound
Since here we first together saw and heard
Spring's light reverberate and reiterate word
Shine forth and speak in season. Life stands crowned
Here with the best one thing it ever found,
As of my soul's best birthdays dawns the third.
There is a friend that as the wise man saith
Cleaves closer than a brother: nor to me
Hath time not shown, through days like waves at strife,
This truth more sure than all things else but death,
This pearl most perfect found in all the sea
That washes towards your feet these waifs of life.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909).

[1] The two sonnets by Algernon Charles Swinburne are reprinted from his *Collected Poems*, published by Harper & Brothers.

ON THE RUSSIAN PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

(Written June, 1882)

O Son of man, by lying tongues adored,
By slaughterous hands of slaves with feet red-shod
In carnage deep as ever Christian trod
Profaned with prayer and sacrifice abhorred
And incense from the trembling tyrant's horde,
Brute worshippers of wielders of the rod,
Most murderous even of all that call thee God,
Most treacherous even that ever called thee Lord;
Face loved of little children long ago,
Head hated of the priests and rulers then,
If thou see this, or hear these hounds of thine
Run ravening as the Gadarean swine,
Say, was not this thy Passion, to foreknow
In death's worst hour the works of Christian men?

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

THE MARSEILLAISE

What means this mighty chant, wherein the wail
Of some intolerable woe, grown strong
With sense of more intolerable wrong,
Swells to a stern victorious march — a gale
Of vengeful wrath? What mean the faces pale,
The fierce resolve, the ecstatic pangs along
Life's fiery ways, the demon thoughts which throng
The gates of awe, when these wild notes assail
The sleeping of our souls? Hear ye no more
Than the mad foam of revolution's leaven,
Than a roused people's throne-o'erwhelming tread?
Hark! 't is man's spirit thundering on the shore
Of iron fate; the tramp of titans dread,
Sworn to dethrone the gods unjust from heaven.

John Todhunter (1839– ——).

BUT ONE SHORT WEEK AGO THE TREES WERE BARE

But one short week ago the trees were bare,
And winds were keen and violets pinched with frost;
Winter was with us; but the larches tost
Lightly their crimson buds, and here and there
Rooks cawed. To-day the Spring is in the air
And in the blood: sweet sun-gleams come and go
Upon the hills, in lanes the wild flowers blow,
And tender leaves are bursting everywhere.
About the hedge the small birds peer and dart,
Each bush is full of amorous flutterings
And little rapturous cries. The thrush apart
Sits throned, and loud his ripe contralto rings.
Music is on the wind, and in my heart
Infinite love for all created things.

John Todhunter.

THE JEWS' CEMETERY

Lido of Venice

A tract of land swept by the salt sea foam,
Fringed with acacia flowers, and billowy-deep
In meadow grasses, where tall poppies sleep,
And bees athirst for wilding honey roam.
How many a bleeding heart hath found its home
Under these hillocks which the sea-mews sweep!
Here knelt an outcast race to curse and weep,
Age after age, 'neath heaven's unanswering dome.
Sad is the place, and solemn. Grave by grave,
Lost in the dunes, with rank weeds overgrown,
Pines in abandonment; as though unknown,
Uncared for, lay the dead, whose records pave
This path neglected; each forgotten stone
Wept by no mourner but the moaning wave.

John Addington Symonds (1840–1893).

INEVITABLE CHANGE

Rebuke me not! I have nor wish nor skill
To alter one hair's breadth in all this house
Of Love, rising with domes so luminous
And air-built galleries on life's topmost hill!
Only I know that fate, chance, years that kill,
Change that transmutes, have aimed their darts at us;
Envying each lovely shrine and amorous
Reared on earth's soil by man's too passionate will.
Dread thou the moment when these glittering towers,
These adamantine walls and gates of gems,
Shall fade like forms of sun-forsaken cloud;
When dulled by imperceptible chill hours,
The golden spires of our Jerusalems
Shall melt to mist and vanish in night's shroud!

John Addington Symonds.

THE SUBLIME

To stand upon a windy pinnacle,
Beneath the infinite blue of the blue noon,
And underfoot a valley terrible
As that dim gulf, where sense and being swoon
When the soul parts; a giant valley strewn
With giant rocks; asleep, and vast, and still,
And far away. The torrent, which has hewn
His pathway through the entrails of the hill,
Now crawls along the bottom and anon
Lifts up his voice, a muffled tremulous roar,
Borne on the wind an instant, and then gone
Back to the caverns of the middle air;
A voice as of a nation overthrown
With beat of drums, when hosts have marched to war.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840- ——).

A NEW PILGRIMAGE

XXVIII

YET it is pitiful how friendships die,
Spite of our oaths and eternal high vows.
Some fall through blite of tongues wagged secretly,
Some through strife loud in empty honour's house.
Some vanish with fame got too glorious,
And rapt to heaven in fiery chariots fly;
And some are drowned in sloth and the carouse
Of wedded joys and long love's tyranny.
O ye, who with high-hearted valliance
Deem truth eternal and youth's dreams divine,
Keep ye from love, and fame, and the mischance
Of other worship than the Muses nine.
So haply shall you tread life's latest strand
With a true brother still, and hand in hand.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

WITH ESTHER [1]

II

WHEN I hear laughter from a tavern door,
When I see crowds agape and in the rain
Watching on tiptoe and with stifled roar
To see a rocket fired or a bull slain,
When misers handle gold, when orators
Touch strong men's hearts with glory till they weep,
When cities deck their streets for barren wars
Which have laid waste their youth, and when I keep
Calmly the count of my own life, and see
On what poor stuff my manhood's dreams were fed
Till I too learn'd what dole of vanity
Will serve a human soul for daily bread,
— Then I remember that I once was young
And lived with Esther the world's gods among.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

[1] Reprinted from *Esther: A Young Man's Tragedy*, by permission of the publishers, Small, Maynard & Company.

DON QUIXOTE

Behind thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack!
To make Wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Despatch its Dogberrys upon thy track:
Alas! poor Knight! Alas! poor soul possest!
Yet would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
Some fire of thine might burn within us still!
Ah! would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest — were it but a mill.

Austin Dobson (1840– ——).

LIFE AND DEATH

From morn to eve they struggled — Life and Death.
At first it seemed to me that they in mirth
Contended, and as foes of equal worth,
So firm their feet, so undisturbed their breath.
But when the sharp red sun cut through its sheath
Of western clouds, I saw the brown arms' girth
Tighten and bear that radiant form to earth,
And suddenly both fell upon the heath.
And then the wonder came — for when I fled
To where those great antagonists down fell
I could not find the body that I sought,
And when and where it went I could not tell;
One only form was left of those who fought,
The long dark form of Death, and it was dead.

Cosmo Monkhouse (1840–1901).

THE DEAD

The dead abide with us! Though stark and cold
Earth seems to grip them, they are with us still.
They have forged our chains of being for good or ill;
And their invisible hands these hands yet hold.
Our perishable bodies are the mould
In which their strong imperishable will —
Mortality's deep yearning to fulfil —
Hath grown incorporate through dim time untold.
Vibrations infinite of life in death,
As a star's travelling light survives its star!
So may we hold our lives, that when we are
The fate of those who then will draw this breath,
They shall not drag us to their judgment-bar
And curse the heritage which we bequeath.

Mathilde Blind (1841–1896).

JACOB AND THE ANGEL

For a design by J. T. Nettleship

Shall he not bless me? Will he never speak
Those words of proud concession, "Let me go:
For the day breaketh?" Wearily and slow
The shrouded hours troop past across the peak,
Eastering; and I, with hands grown all too weak
And strength that would have failed me long ago,
But for the set soul, strain to overthrow
The instant God. — Alas! 't is I that speak —
Not Jacob — I that in this night of days
Do wrestle with the angel Art, till breath
And gladness fail me. Yet the stern soul stays
And will not loose him till he bless me; ay,
Even though the night defer my victory
Until the day break on the dawn of death.

John Payne (1842– ——).

WITH A COPY OF HENRY VAUGHN'S SACRED POEMS

Lay down thy burden at this gate and knock.
What if the world without be dark and drear?
For there be fountains of refreshment here
Sweeter than all the runnels of the rock.
Hark! even to thy hand upon the lock
A wilding warble answers, loud and clear,
That falls as fain upon the heart of fear
As shepherds' song unto the folded flock.
This is the quiet wood-church of the soul.
Be thankful, heart, to him betimes that stole,
Some Easter morning, through the golden door —
Haply ajar for early prayer to rise —
And brought thee back from that song-flowered shore
These haunting harmonies of Paradise.

John Payne.

AWAKENING

With brain o'erworn, with heart a summer clod,
With eye so practised in each form around, —
And all forms mean, — to glance above the ground
Irks it, each day of many days we plod,
Tongue-tied and deaf, along life's common road;
But suddenly, we know not how, a sound
Of living streams, an odour, a flower crowned
With dew, a lark upspringing from the sod,
And we awake. O joy of deep amaze!
Beneath the everlasting hills we stand,
We hear the voices of the morning seas,
And earnest prophesyings in the land,
While from the open heaven leans forth at gaze
The encompassing great cloud of witnesses.

Edward Dowden (1843–1913).

SEEKING GOD

I SAID, "I will find God," and forth I went
To seek Him in the clearness of the sky.
But over me stood unendurably
Only a pitiless, sapphire firmament
Ringing the world, — blank splendour; yet intent
Still to find God, "I will go seek," said I,
"His way upon the waters," and drew nigh
An ocean marge weed-strewn and foam besprent;
And the waves dashed on idle sand and stone,
And very vacant was the long, blue sea;
But in the evening as I sat alone,
My window opening to the vanishing day,
Dear God! I could not choose but kneel and pray,
And it sufficed that I was found of Thee.

Edward Dowden.

MY LOVE FOR THEE DOTH MARCH LIKE ARMÈD MEN

MY love for thee doth march like armèd men
Against a queenly city they would take.
Along the army's front its banners shake;
Across the mountains and the sun-smit plain
It steadfast sweeps as sweeps the steadfast rain;
And now the trumpet makes the still air quake,
And now the thundering cannon doth awake
Echo on echo, echoing loud again.
But, lo — the conquest higher than bard had sung;
Instead of answering cannon, proud surrender.
Joyful the iron gates are open flung,
And for the conqueror, welcome gay and tender!
O bright the invader's path with tribute flowers,
While comrade flags flame forth on walls and towers.

Richard Watson Gilder (1844–1909).

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Ægean isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again, —
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

Andrew Lang (*1844–1912*).

TRANSFORMATION

"Give me the wine of happiness," I cried,
"The bread of life! — O ye benign, unknown,
Immortal powers! — I crave them for my own;
I am athirst, I will not be denied
Though Hell were up in arms!" No sound replied;
But turning back to my rude board and lone,
My soul, confounded, there beheld — a stone,
Pale water in a shallow cup beside!
With gushing tears, in utter hopelessness,
I stood and gazed. Then rose a voice that spoke, —
"God gave this, too, and what He gave will bless!"
And 'neath the hands that trembling took and broke,
Lo, truly a sweet miracle divine,
The stone turned bread, the water ruby wine!

Gertrude Bloede (*1845–1905*).

SUNKEN GOLD [1]

In dim green depths rot ingot-laden ships;
And gold doubloons, that from the drowned hand fell,
Lie nestled in the ocean-flower's bell
With love's old gifts, once kissed by long-drowned lips;
And round some wrought gold cup the sea-grass whips,
And hides lost pearls, near pearls still in their shell,
Where sea-weed forests fill each ocean dell
And seek dim sunlight with their restless tips.
So lie the wasted gifts, the long-lost hopes
Beneath the now hushed surface of myself,
In lonelier depths than where the diver gropes;
They lie deep, deep; but I at times behold
In doubtful glimpses, on some reefy shelf,
The gleam of irrecoverable gold.

Eugene Lee-Hamilton (1845–1907).

SEA-SHELL MURMURS

The hollow sea-shell which for years hath stood
On dusty shelves, when held against the ear
Proclaims its stormy parent; and we hear
The faint far murmur of the breaking flood.
We hear the sea. The sea? It is the blood
In our own veins, impetuous and near,
And pulses keeping pace with hope and fear
And with our feelings' ever shifting mood.
Lo! in my heart I hear, as in a shell,
The murmur of a world beyond the grave,
Distinct, distinct, though faint and far it be.
Thou fool! this echo is a cheat as well, —
The hum of earthly instincts; and we crave
A world unreal as the shell-heard sea.

Eugene Lee-Hamilton.

[1] Reprinted from *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours*, by permission of the publisher, Elliot Stock.

AFTER SEVERANCE

So all the vows of friendship which we swore
Are broke, and we estranged, at distance stand.
Across the chasm is stretched no beckoning hand
Of reconciliation. Now, no more
We hold sweet talk of books and poets' lore;
The current of a discord, cold, austere,
Widens between us, year by bitter year,
And each drifts further from the other's door.
Thus some wide summer river that of yore
Floated the lover to his mistress dear
Across the sunset waters, now with snows
Engorged, rough-packed with jagged ice-wastes drear,
Barriers the way, nor intercourse allows
From incommunicable shore to shore.

Lloyd Mifflin (*1846–——*).

SUICIDE

Invisible as a wind along the sky,
She ever wanders o'er the earth immense,
A spirit of beauty but malevolence,
With foot unechoing and with furtive eye.
She loaths and shuns all haunts where peace may lie,
Or love, and every joy engendered thence,
Yet prowls to wait, with wary and avid sense,
For sorrow's heaviest and most burning sigh!
Then, when some dreary sufferer darkly fails
To find in life's chill heaven one starry trace,
One hope no menace of despair assails,
Toward him she steals with sure insidious pace,
And slowly to his desperate look unveils
The maddening glooms and splendors of her face!

Edgar Fawcett (*1847–1904*).

OTHER WORLDS

I SOMETIMES muse, when my adventurous gaze
Has roamed the starry arches of the night,
That were I dowered with strong angelic sight,
All would look changed in those pale heavenly ways.
What wheeling worlds my vision would amaze!
What chasms of gloom would thrill me and affright!
What rhythmic equipoise would rouse delight!
What moons would beam on me, what suns would blaze!
Then through my awed soul sweeps the larger thought
Of how creation's edict may have set
Vast human multitudes on those far spheres,
With towering passions to which mine mean naught,
With majesties of happiness, or yet
With agonies of unconjectured tears!

Edgar Fawcett.

PRESCIENCE OF DEATH [1]

I WONDER oft why God, who is so good,
Has barred so close, so close the gates of death.
I stand and listen with suspended breath
While night and silence round about me brood,
If then, perchance, some spirit-whisper would
Grow audible and pierce my torpid sense,
And oft I feel a presence, veiled, intense,
That pulses softly through the solitude;
But as my soul leaps quivering to my ear
To grasp the potent message, all takes flight,
And from the fields and woods I only hear
The murmurous chorus of the summer night.
I am as one that's dead — yet in his gloom
Feels faintly song of birds above his tomb.

Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen (1848–1895).

[1] Reprinted from *Idyls of Norway*, by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

VENUS OF THE LOUVRE

Down the long hall she glistens like a star,
The foam-born mother of Love, transfixed to stone,
Yet none the less immortal, breathing on.
Time's brutal hand hath maimed but could not mar.
When first the enthralled enchantress from afar
Dazzled mine eyes, I saw not her alone,
Serenely poised on her world-worshipped throne,
As when she guided once her dove-drawn car, —
But at her feet a pale, death-stricken Jew,
Her life adorer, sobbed farewell to love.
Here *Heine* wept! Here still he weeps anew,
Nor ever shall his shadow lift or move,
While mourns one ardent heart, one poet-brain,
For vanished Hellas and Hebraic pain.

Emma Lazarus (*1849–1887*).

SUCCESS

Oft have I brooded on defeat and pain,
The pathos of the stupid, stumbling throng.
These I ignore to-day and only long
To pour my soul forth in one trumpet strain,
One clear, grief-shattering, triumphant song,
For all the victories of man's high endeavor,
Palm-bearing, laurelled deeds that live forever,
The splendor clothing him whose will is strong.
Hast thou beheld the deep, glad eyes of one
Who has persisted and achieved? Rejoice!
On naught diviner shines the all-seeing sun.
Salute him with free heart and choral voice,
'Midst flippant, feeble crowds of spectres wan,
The bold, significant, successful man.

Emma Lazarus.

EPITHALAMIUM

High in the organ-loft, with lillied hair,
Love plied the pedals with his snowy foot,
Pouring forth music like the scent of fruit,
And stirring all the incense-laden air;
We knelt before the altar's gold rail, where
The priest stood robed, with chalice and palm-shoot,
With music-men, who bore citole and lute,
Behind us, and the attendant virgins fair;
And so our red aurora flashed to gold,
Our dawn to sudden sun, and all the while
The high-voiced children trebled clear and cold,
The censer-boys went singing down the aisle,
And far above, with fingers strong and sure,
Love closed our lives' triumphant overture.

Edmund W. Gosse (*1849–——*).

THREE SONNETS OF SORROW[1]

I

A child, with mystic eyes and flowing hair,
I saw her first, 'mid flowers that shared her grace:
Though but a boy, I cried, "How fair a face!"
And, coming nearer, told her she was fair.
She faintly smiled, yet did not say, "Forbear"!
But seemed to take a pleasure in my praise.
She led my steps through many a leafy place
And pointed where shy birds and flowers were.
At length we stood upon a brooklet's brink —
I seem to hear its sources babbling yet —
She gave me water from her hand to drink,
The while her eyes upon its flow were set.
"Thy name?" I asked; she answered low, "Regret,"
Then faded as the sun began to sink.

Philip Bourke Marston (*1850–1887*).

[1] The two sonnets by Philip Bourke Marston are reprinted from his *Collected Poems*, by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

LOVE AND MUSIC

I LISTENED to the music broad and deep:
I heard the tenor in an ecstasy
Touch the sweet, distant goal; I heard the cry
Of prayer and passion; and I heard the sweep
Of mighty wings, that in their waving keep
The music that the spheres make endlessly, —
Then my cheek quivered, tears made blind mine eye;
As flame to flame I felt the quick blood leap,
And, through the tides and moonlit winds of sound,
To me love's passionate voice grew audible.
Again I felt thy heart to my heart bound,
Then silence on the viols and voices fell;
But, like the still, small voice within a shell,
I heard Love thrilling through the void profound.

Philip Bourke Marston.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

NEARER the eagles swoop in darkening rings,
Death scents his awful quarry from afar,
While men in millions march to bloody war
Hateless, unhated, at the word of Kings:
But somewhere hid beneath his secret wings
The sons of God, before a juster bar,
Plead in his name who bore the cross and scar
For Love that sees clear-eyed what war-lust brings.
Plead on, ye seers with love-enlightened eyes,
Hold up your hands to where the angels gaze
With deep compassion on our human strife;
Prayer moves the world with power beyond amaze,
And they who look above this mortal life
Know Peace on earth, in Heaven hath great allies.

Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley (1851–——).

THE ASSIGNATION

THE darkness throbbed that night with the great heat,
And my heart throbbed at thought of what should be;
The house was dumb, the lock slid silently;
I only heard the night's hot pulses beat
Around me as I sped with quiet feet
Down the dark corridors, and once the sea
Moaned in its slumber, and I stayed, but she
Came forth to meet me lily-white and sweet.
Was there a man's soul ever worth her kiss?
Silent and still I stood, and she drew near,
And her lips mixed with mine, and her sweet breath
Fanned my hot face; and afterward I wis,
What the sea said to us I did not hear;
But now I know it spake of Doom and Death.

Herbert E. Clarke (*1852–* ——).

BEYOND?

WHAT lies beyond the splendour of the sun,
Beyond his flashing belt of sister-spheres?
What deeps are they whereinto disappears
The visitant comet's sword, of fire fine-spun?
What rests beyond the myriad lights that run
Their nightly race around our human fears?
Hope-signals raised on multitudinous spears
Of armies, captained by the Eternal One?
Beyond the sun, and far beyond the stars,
Beyond the weariness of this our day,
Beyond this fretting at the prison-bars,
The urgent soul, divine in soulless clay,
Bids us set forth, through endless avatars,
To seek where God has hidden Himself away.

George Arthur Greene (*1853–* ——).

RENOUNCEMENT

I MUST not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight —
The thought of thee — and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
Oh! just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away, —
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

Alice Meynell (*1853–——*).

NO MORE THESE PASSION-WORN FACES SHALL MEN'S EYES

No more these passion-worn faces shall men's eyes
Behold in life. Death leaves no trace behind
Of their wild hate and wilder love, grown blind
In desperate longing, more than the foam which lies
Splashed up awhile where the showered spray descries
The waves whereto their cold limbs were resigned;
Yet ever doth the sea-wind's undefined
Vague wailing shudder with their dying sighs.
For all men's souls twixt sorrow and love are cast,
As on the earth each lingers his brief space,
While surely nightfall comes where each man's face
In death's obliteration sinks at last,
As a deserted wind-tossed sea's foam trace —
Life's chilled boughs emptied by death's autumn blast.

Oliver Madox Brown (*1855–1874*).

GENIUS LOCI [1]

PEACE, shepherd, peace! What boots it singing on?
Since long ago grace-giving Phœbus died,
And all the train that loved the stream-bright side
Of the poetic mount with him are gone
Beyond the shores of Styx and Acheron,
In unexplorèd realms of night to hide.
The clouds that strew their shadows far and wide
Are all of Heaven that visits Helicon.
Yet here, where never muse or god did haunt,
Still may some nameless power of Nature stray,
Pleased with the reedy stream's continual chaunt
And purple pomp of these broad fields in May.
The shepherds meet him where he herds the kine,
And careless pass him by whose is the gift divine.

Margaret L. Woods (1856– ——).

HER CHOICE [2]

"BEHOLD! it is a draught from Lethe's wave.
Thy voice of weeping reacheth even that strand
Washed by strange waters in Elysian land;
I bring the peace thy weary soul doth crave.
Drink, and from vain regret thy future save."
She lifted deep, dark eyes wherein there lay
The sacred sorrow of love's ended day,
Then took the chalice from the angel's hand.
Life with new love, or life with memory
Of the old love? Her heart made instant choice;
Like tender music rang the faithful voice:
"O sweet my love, an offering to thee!"
And with brave smile, albeit the tears flowed fast,
Upon the earth the priceless draught she cast.

Eliza Calvert Hall (1856– ——).

[1] Reprinted from *Collected Poems*, by permission of the publishers, John Lane Company.
[2] Reprinted from *Century Magazine*, by permission of the Editors.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years —
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street —
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad.

Lizette Woodworth Reese (*1856–* ——).

HISTORY

Darkly, as by some gloomèd mirror glassed,
Herein at times the brooding eye beholds
The great scarred visage of the pompous Past;
But oftener only the embroidered folds
And soiled regality of his rent robe,
Whose tattered skirts are ruined dynasties
And cumber with their trailing pride the globe,
And sweep the dusty ages in our eyes;
Till the world seems a world of husks and bones
Where sightless Seers and Immortals dead,
Kings that remember not their awful thrones,
Invincible armies long since vanquished,
And powerless potentates and foolish sages
Lie 'mid the crumbling of the massy ages.

William Watson (*1858–* ——).

FRIEND, WHO IN THESE SAD NUMBERS DOST DEPLORE

To an American Poet after reading his "Dirge on the Violation of the Panama Treaty"

FRIEND, who in these sad numbers dost deplore
A faithless deed: because I love thy land,
That gave to me of late so hearty a hand,
In thronged Manhattan, or amid the roar
Of that loud city on Michigan's still shore,
Therefore do I rejoice that one pure band
Keep not ignoble silence, but withstand
Ev'n Her, their mother, when she shuts the door
In Honour's face. So Chatham, whose free speech
Yet rings through Time—so Wordsworth, whose free song
Comes blowing from his mountains — dared to impeach
Their England, speaking out for Man. And long
May Earth breed men like these, who scorned to teach
That Power can shift the bounds of Right and Wrong.

William Watson.

RIZPAH [1]

BLOWN through the gusty spaces of the night,
The pale clouds fleet like ghosts along the sky;
A fitful wind goes moaning feebly by,
And the faint moon, poised o'er the craggy height,
Dies in its own uncertain, misty light.
Within the hills the water-springs are dry;
The herbs are withered; and the sand-wastes lie
Dim, wide, and lonely to the weary sight.
Behold! her awful vigil she will keep
Through the wan night as through the burning day;
Though all the world should sleep she will not sleep,
But watch, wild-eyed and fierce, to scare away,
As round and round, with hoarse, low cries they creep,
From her dead sons the hungry beasts of prey.

James B. Kenyon (1858– ——).

[1] The two sonnets by James B. Kenyon are reprinted from *In Realms of Gold*, by permission of the publishers, Cassell & Company, Limited.

THE TRAVELLER

When in the dark we slowly drift away
O'er unknown seas, and busy thoughts at last
Are quieted, and all the cares are past
That, bandit-like, infest the realms of day —
To what pale country does the spirit stray?
Within what wan lit land, what regions vast,
Does this strange traveller travel far and fast,
Till in the east the day breaks, cold and gray?
Ah, tell me, when we slumber, whither goes,
And whence at waking comes, the silent guest,
Whose face no man hath seen, whom no man knows —
The dim familiar of each human breast?
Behold, at length, when day indeed shall close,
Will this uneasy traveller, too, have rest?

James B. Kenyon.

LOVE'S VARLETS

Love, he is nearer (though the moralist
Of rule and line cry shame on me), more near
To thee and to the heart of thee, be't wist,
Who sins against thee even for the dear
Lack that he hath of thee; than who, chill-wrapt
In thy light-thought-on customed livery,
Keeps all thy laws with formal service apt,
Save that great law to tremble and to be
Shook to his heart-strings if there do but pass
The rumour of thy pinions. Such one is
Thy varlet, guerdoned with the daily mass
That feed on thy remainder-meats of bliss.
More hath he of thy bosom, whose slips of grace
Fell through despair of thy close gracious face.

Francis Thompson (1859–1907).

THE CONTRAST

He loved her; having felt his love begin
With that first look, — as lover oft avers.
He made pale flowers his pleading ministers,
Impressed sweet music, drew the springtime in
To serve his suit; but when he could not win,
Forgot her face and those gray eyes of hers;
And at her name his pulse no longer stirs,
And life goes on as if she had not been.
She never loved him; but she loved Love so,
So reverenced Love, that all her being shook
At his demand whose entrance she denied.
Her thoughts of him such tender color took
As western skies that keep the afterglow.
The words he spoke were with her till she died.

Helen Gray Cone (*1859–* ——).

AN UNPRAISED PICTURE [1]

I saw a picture once by Angelo, —
"Unfinished," said the critic, "done in youth," —
And that was all, no thought of praise, forsooth!
He was informed, and doubtless it was so.
And yet I let an hour of dreaming go
The way of all time, touched to tears and ruth,
Passion and joy, the prick of conscience's tooth,
Before that careworn Christ's divine, soft glow.
The painter's yearning with an unsure hand
Had moved me more than might his master days:
He seemed to speak like one whose Mecca-land
Is first beheld, tho' faint and far the ways;
Who may not then his shaken voice command
Yet trembles forth a word of prayer and praise.

Richard E. Burton (*1859–* ——).

[1] Reprinted from *Dumb* in June, by permission of the publishers, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company.

AMERICA TO ENGLAND, 1900 [1]

THE nightmare melts at last, and London wakes
To her old habit of victorious ease.
More men, and more, and more for over-seas,
More guns until the giant hammer breaks
That patriot folk whom even God forsakes.
Shall not great England work her will on these,
The foolish little nations, and appease
An angry shame that in her memory aches?
But far beyond the fierce-contested flood,
The cannon-planted pass, the shell-torn town,
The last wild carnival of fire and blood,
Beware, beware that dim and awful Shade,
Armored with Milton's sword and Cromwell's frown,
Affronted freedom, of her own betrayed!

Katherine Lee Bates (*1859–* ——).

THE REST IS SILENCE

II

EAGER and shy, as when among her peers
A girl will pour her confidence, she told,
In voice where laughter ran a thread of gold,
A history all novel to our ears.
Her blissful eyes oblivious of tears,
With lingering touch she one by one unrolled
Her bridal memories from fold on fold
Of fragrant silence. Dead these fifty years
Was he with whom, young hand in hand, she went
To their first home, which simple neighbor-folk
Had filled with garden-bloom and forest scent;
Yet still of him, and that June path they fared,
Those welcoming flowers, her failing accents spoke;
— Of how Love led her to a place prepared.

Katherine Lee Bates.

[1] The two sonnets by Katherine Lee Bates are reprinted from *America the Beautiful*, by permission of the publishers, Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

THE CUP OF LIFE[1]

One after one the high emotions fade;
Time's wheeling measure empties and refills
Year after year; we seek no more the hills
That lured our youth divine and unafraid,
But swarming on some common highway, made
Beaten and smooth, plod onward with blind feet;
And only where the crowded crossways meet
We halt and question, anxious and dismayed.
Yet can we not escape it; some we know
Have angered and grown mad, some scornfully laughed;
Yet surely to each lip — to mine, to thine —
Comes with strange scent and pallid poisonous glow
The cup of Life, that dull Circean draught,
That taints us all, and turns the half to swine.

Archibald Lampman (1861–1899).

THE LARGEST LIFE

II

Nay, never once to feel we are alone,
While the great human heart around us lies:
To make the smile on other lips our own,
To live upon the light in others' eyes:
To breathe without a doubt the limpid air
Of that most perfect love that knows no pain:
To say — I love you — only, and not care
Whether the love come back to us again,
Divinest self-forgetfulness, at first
A task, then a tonic, then a need;
To greet with open hands the best and worst,
And only for another's wound to bleed:
This is to see the beauty that God meant,
Wrapped round with life, ineffably content.

Archibald Lampman.

[1] The two sonnets by Archibald Lampman are reprinted from his *Poems* (Morang & Company), by permission of the executors of the Lampman estate.

TO PAIN [1]

Not by the minutes of thin torture spun,
Not by the nights whose hours halt and slip back,
Not by the days when golden noon turns black,
Hast thou dismayed me; but that, one by one,
Pale shadows pass me of my tasks undone,
While, like a victim loosed from wheel and rack,
With will unnerved, breath scant and sinew slack,
I droop, where glad folk labour in the sun.
And yet, O winged Inquisitor, return,
Stay, though I cringe and cry and plead for grace,
If thou hast more to teach, still would I learn;
I choose, even with faint heart and quivering lip,
Some place in the great, patient fellowship
Of those that know the light upon thy face.

Sophie Jewett (1861–1909).

TO W. P.[2]

II

With you a part of me hath passed away;
For in the peopled forest of my mind
A tree made leafless by this wintry wind
Shall never don again its green array.
Chapel and fireside, country road and bay,
Have something of their friendliness resigned;
Another, if I would, I could not find,
And I am grown much older in a day.
But yet I treasure in my memory
Your gift of charity, your mellow ease,
And the dear honour of your amity;
For these once mine, my life is rich with these.
And I scarce know which part may greater be, —
What I keep of you, or you rob from me.

George Santayana (1863– ——).

[1] Reprinted from *Poems*, by permission of the publishers, Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

[2] The two sonnets by George Santayana are reprinted from *Sonnets and Other Verse*, by permission of the publishers, Duffield & Company.

SONNETS

XX

THESE strewn thoughts, by the mountain pathway sprung,
I conned for comfort, till I ceased to grieve,
And with these flowering thorns I dare to weave
The crown, great Mother, on thine altar hung.
Teach thou a larger speech to my loosed tongue,
And to mine opened eyes thy secrets give,
That in thy perfect love I learn to live,
And in thine immortality be young.
The soul is not on earth an alien thing
That hath her life's rich sources otherwhere;
She is a parcel of the sacred air.
She takes her being from the breath of Spring,
The glance of Phœbus is her font of light,
And her long sleep a draught of primal night.

George Santayana.

NOVEMBER [1]

HARK you such sound as quivers? Kings will hear,
As kings have heard, and tremble on their thrones;
The old will feel the weight of mossy stones;
The young alone will laugh and scoff at fear.
It is the tread of armies marching near,
From scarlet lands to lands forever pale;
It is a bugle dying down the gale;
It is the sudden gushing of a tear.
And it is hands that grope at ghostly doors;
And romp of spirit children on the pave;
It is the tender sighing of the brave
Who fell, ah! long ago, in futile wars;
It is such sound as death; and, after all,
'T is but the forest letting dead leaves fall.

Mahlon Leonard Fisher (1874–——).

[1] Reprinted by permission from Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1913*. The sonnet was originally published in *The Bellman*.

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel — so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know at last I may not enter more.
Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing, hark!
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

Herman Hagedorn (1882– ——).

THE SOLDIER [1]

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke (1887–1915).

[1] Reprinted from *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*, by permission of the Editor.

TO MRS. HYNDMAN[1]

JULY 1, 1913

MOTHER of those whose need of mothering
Made them your children! By your open grave
High summer speaks with voice tall poplars have
At noon, and larks have found a place to sing,
Though round July's blue mirror coil and cling
The factory's dark breath. For you, who gave
Love-labour, yet more men shall live to save
The seed of men from Mammon's harvesting.
Wherefore I think you would not have us weep
That stand together here, and in the sun
Look last on you, who, from long labour, won
This quiet ground's full heritage of sleep,
But tears within the heart would have us keep,
That human love like yours grows fresh upon.

John Helston.

DEAF

THESE have I lost: now cushats only call
In long-lost groves down vales of memory;
And cuckoos sing in springs that used to be;
While owls go hooting, weirdly musical,
'Neath purple nights that have been buried all
In the dark tomb of years; and ceaselessly
The singing rills reëcho from a sea
Where long ago they found their funeral.
And thro' the dusty crannies of my heart
The winds go wailing; and the dancing leaves
Beat their fine joys behind my closèd eyes;
While in a secret storehouse set apart
I hear the sobbing of a sea that grieves,
And of a little summer wind that dies.

H. M. Waithman.

[1] Reprinted from *Aphrodite, and Other Poems*, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

THE PENALTY OF LOVE [1]

If Love should count you worthy, and should deign
One day to seek your door and be your guest,
Pause! ere you draw the bolt and bid him rest,
If in your old content you would remain.
For not alone he enters: in his train
Are angels of the mists, the lonely quest,
Dreams of the unfulfilled, the unpossessed;
And sorrow, and Life's immemorial pain.
He wakes desires you never may forget,
He shows you stars you never saw before,
He makes you share with him, for evermore,
The burden of the world's divine regret.
How wise were you to open not! — and yet,
How poor if you should turn him from the door!

Sidney Royse Lysaght.

[1] Reprinted from *Poems of the Unknown Way*, by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Aldrich, Thomas Bailey 75, 76
Arnold, Matthew 58
Austin, Alfred 75

Barnes, Barnabe 18
Bates, Katherine Lee 99
Blanchard, Samuel Laman 43
Blind, Mathilde 82
Bloede, Gertrude 85
Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen 79, 80
Bowles, William Lisle 27
Boyesen, Hjalmar Hjorth 88
Brooke, Rupert 103
Brown, Oliver Madox 93
Browne, William 21
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett 49, 50, 51
Burton, Richard E. 98
Byron, Lord 35

Clare, John 38
Clarke, Herbert E. 92
Clough, Arthur Hugh 56
Coleridge, Hartley 41
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 32
Cone, Helen Gray 98
Constable, Henry 9
Cowper, William 26
Cranch, Christopher P. 54

Daniel, Samuel 9, 10
De Vere, Sir Aubrey 35, 36
De Vere, Aubrey, the Younger 55
Dobell, Sydney 60
Dobson, Austin 81
Donne, John 18, 19
Dorr, Julia C. R. 61
Dowden, Edward 83, 84
Drayton, Michael 11
Drummond, William 19, 20

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Faber, Frederick William 54
Fane, Julian Henry 63
Fawcett, Edgar 87, 88
Fisher, Mahlon Leonard 102

Garnett, Richard 73, 74
Gilder, Richard Watson 84
Gosse, Edmund W. 90
Gray, Thomas 25
Greene, George Arthur 92
Greene, Robert 8

Hagedorn, Herman 103
Hall, Eliza Calvert 94
Hallam, Arthur Henry 52
Helston, John 104
Hemans, Felicia Dorothea 37
Herbert, George 21
Hood, Thomas 42
Hunt, Leigh 34

Ingelow, Jean 57

Jackson, Helen Hunt 71
Jewett, Sophie 101

Keats, John 38, 39, 40
Kenyon, James B. 96, 97

Lampman, Archibald 100
Lang, Andrew 85
Lazarus, Emma 89
Lee-Hamilton, Eugene 86
Lodge, Thomas 8
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth 43, 44, 45
Lowell, James Russell 56
Lysaght, Sidney Royse 105

Marston, Philip Bourke 90, 91
Meredith, George 67, 68
Meynell, Alice 93
Mifflin, Lloyd 87
Milton, John 22, 23, 24
Monkhouse, Cosmo 81
Moulton, Louise Chandler 74

Newman, Cardinal 42

Paton, Sir Noel 57
Payne, John 82, 83

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Pfeiffer, Emily 62
Poe, Edgar Allan 48
Procter, Adelaide A. 61

Raleigh, Sir Walter 5
Rawnsley, Hardwicke Drummond 91
Reese, Lizette Woodworth 95
Roscoe, William Caldwell 59
Rossetti, Christina G. 69, 70
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel 63, 64, 65, 66, 67
Rossetti, William Michael 69

Santayana, George 101, 102
Scott, William Bell 53
Shakespeare, William 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Shelley, Percy Bysshe 37
Sidney, Sir Philip 6, 7
Smith, Charlotte 26
Southey, Robert 33
Spenser, Edmund 3, 4, 5
Surrey, Earl of 2
Swinburne, Algernon Charles 76, 77
Sylvester, Joshuah 10
Symonds, John Addington 78, 79

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord 52
Tennyson-Turner, Charles 47, 48
Thompson, Francis 97
Todhunter, John 77, 78
Trench, Archbishop 46

Waddington, Samuel 36
Waithman, H. M. 104
Warton, Thomas 25
Watson, William 95, 96
Watts-Dunton, Theodore 71, 72, 73
White, Henry Kirke 34
White, Joseph Blanco 33
Woods, Margaret L. 94
Wordsworth, William 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
Wyatt, Sir Thomas 1

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A child, with mystic eyes and flowing hair..... 90
A Moth belated, — sun and zephyr-kist..... 62
A Rose, as fair as ever saw the North..... 21
A Sonnet is a moment's monument..... 63
A tract of land swept by the salt sea foam..... 78
A wretched thing it were, to have our heart..... 46
A wrinkled, crabbèd man they picture thee..... 33
Ah, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?..... 18
Alexis, here she stayed; among these pines..... 20
As a fond mother, when the day is o'er..... 43
As on my bed at dawn I mused and prayed..... 48
As one that for a weary space has lain..... 85
Assured of worthiness, we do not dread..... 67
At the round earth's imagined corners blow..... 18
Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered Saints, whose bones.... 23
Avert, High Wisdom, never vainly wooed..... 68

Beauty, sweet Love, is like the morning dew..... 9
Behind thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack..... 81
"Behold! it is a draught from Lethe's wave..... 94
Beneath the loveliest dream there coils a fear 72
Blind Cyclops, hurling stones of destiny..... 62
Blown through the gusty spaces of the night..... 96
Bright Star of Beauty! on whose Eyelids sit..... 11
Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!..... 40
But one short week ago the trees were bare..... 78
By day she wooes me, soft, exceeding fair..... 69
By thine own tears thy song must tears beget..... 65

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night..... 10
Come, blessèd Darkness, come and bring thy balm..... 61
Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace..... 6
Could I have sung one Song that should survive..... 57
Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud..... 24

Darkly, as by some gloomèd mirror glassed..... 95
Dear wood, and you, sweet solitary place 20
Death, be not proud, though some have called thee 19
Divers doth use, as I have heard and know..... 1
Down the long hall she glistens like a star..... 89

Eager and shy, as when among her peers..... 99
Earth has not anything to show more fair..... 28

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Eternal spirit of the chainless Mind! 35
Even thus, methinks, a city reared should be 52

Fair art thou, Phillis, ay, so fair, sweet maid 8
Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings 22
Farewell to thee, and to our dreams farewell 73
Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn 58
Friend, who in these sad numbers dost deplore 96
From child to youth; from youth to arduous man 65
From morn to eve they struggled — Life and Death 81
From you have I been absent in the spring 15
Full many a glorious morning have I seen 13

"Give me the wine of happiness," I cried 85
Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand 50
Green little vaulter in the sunny grass 34

Haply some Rajah first in ages gone 57
Hark you such sound as quivers? Kings will hear 102
Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance 7
He loved her; having felt his love begin 98
High in the organ-loft, with lillied hair 90
How do I love thee? Let me count the ways 51
How like the leper, with his own sad cry 47
How long, O Lord? — The voice is sounding still 69
How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers! 45
How sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal! 27
How sweet to be thus nestling deep in boughs 38

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom 45
I have known cities with the strong-armed Rhine 54
I know that all beneath the moon decays 19
I listened to the music broad and deep 91
I longed for rest, and some one spoke me fair 74
I met a traveller from an antique land 37
I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong 93
I said, "I will find God," and forth I went 84
I saw a picture once by Angelo 98
I saw the Master of the Sun. He stood 55
I sometimes muse, when my adventurous gaze 88
I will not rail or grieve, when torpid eld 74
I wonder oft why God, who is so good 88
If I have sinned in act, I may repent 41
If I should die, think only this of me 103
If Love should count you worthy, and should deign 105
If thou must love me, let it be for nought 50
In dim green depths rot ingot-laden ships 86

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

In the old void of unrecorded time..... 54
In vain to me the smiling mornings shine..... 25
Invisible as a wind along the sky..... 87
It is a beauteous evening, calm and free..... 29
It may indeed be phantasy when I..... 32
It was late summer, and the grass again..... 36

Lay down thy burden at this gate and knock..... 83
Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust 7
Let me not to the marriage of true minds..... 17
Like a musician that with flying finger..... 59
Like a young child who to his mother's door..... 103
Like as a huntsman after weary chase..... 4
Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt us round! 21
Love, he is nearer, though the moralist 97

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheer..... 3
Mary! I want a lyre with other strings..... 26
Methinks I have passed through some dreadful door..... 53
Methought I saw my late espousèd saint..... 24
Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay..... 5
Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour..... 29
Most glorious Lord of life! that, on this day..... 4
Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes..... 32
Mother of those whose need of mothering..... 104
Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold..... 38
My lady's presence makes the Roses red..... 9
My love for thee doth march like armèd men..... 84
My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming... 16
Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew..... 33

Nay, never once to feel we are alone..... 100
Nearer the eagles swoop in darkening rings..... 91
No longer mourn for me when I am dead..... 14
No more these passion-worn faces shall men's eyes..... 93
Not by the minutes of thin torture spun..... 101
Not I myself know all my love for thee..... 64
Not marble, nor the gilded monuments..... 14
Not that the earth is changing, O my God!..... 67
Now on the summit of Love's topmost peak..... 75

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes..... 70
O Friend! I know not which way I must look..... 28
O Mighty Mother, hearken! for thy foes..... 61
O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray..... 22
O soft embalmer of the still midnight!..... 40
O Son of man, by lying tongues adored..... 77

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

O Time! who know'st a lenient hand to lay 27
Oft have I brooded on defeat and pain 89
Oft have I seen at some cathedral door 44
Oft in the after-days, when thou and I 63
On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose 68
One after one the high emotions fade 100
One day I wrote her name upon the strand 5
Once more the eternal melodies from far 37
Others abide our question. Thou art free 58
Our love is not a fading, earthly flower 56
Over that breathing waste of friends and foes 60

Peace, shepherd, peace! What boots it singing on? 94
Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem 43
Poet, whose unscarred feet have trodden Hell 73

Rebuke me not! I have nor wish nor skill 79
Remember me when I am gone away 70
Revolving worlds, revolving systems, yea 53
Royal and saintly Cashel! I would gaze 35

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art! 48
Scorn not the sonnet; Critic, you have frowned 31
Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green 2
Shall he not bless me? Will he never speak 82
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 12
She turned the fair page with her fairer hand 60
Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part 11
So all the vows of friendship which we swore 87
Some laws there are too sacred for the hand 36
Speak low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet 49
Spring speaks again, and all our woods are stirred 76
Surprised by joy — impatient as the Wind 31

That he is dead the sons of kings are glad 71
That time of year thou mayst in me behold 15
The bubble of the silver-springing waves 59
The darkness throbbed that night with the great heat 92
The dead abide with us! Though stark and cold 82
The expense of spirit in a waste of shame 17
The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove 26
The holiest of all holidays are those 44
The hollow sea-shell which for years hath stood 86
The lost days of my life until to-day 66
The Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon 47
The nightmare melts at last, and London wakes 99
The poetry of earth is never dead 39

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings..... 2
The world is too much with us; late and soon..... 30
There is a silence where hath been no sound..... 42
These have I lost: now cushats only call..... 104
These strewn thoughts, by the mountain pathway sprung. 102
They do but grope in learning's pedant round..... 42
They rose to where their sovran eagle sails..... 52
This holy season, fit to fast and pray..... 3
Though to the vilest things beneath the moon..... 56
To leave unseen so many a glorious sight..... 46
To one who has been long in city pent..... 39
To stand upon a windy pinnacle..... 79
Two Voices are there; one is of the sea..... 30

Under the arch of Life, where love and death..... 66

Were I as base as is the lowly plain..... 10
What art thou, Mighty One! and where thy seat?..... 34
What lies beyond the splendour of the sun..... 92
What means this mighty chant, wherein the wail..... 77
What meant the poets in invective verse..... 8
What power is this? What witchery wins my feet..... 72
What was't awakened first the untried ear..... 41
When do I see thee most, belovèd one?..... 64
When I behold what pleasure is Pursuit..... 76
When I consider how my light is spent..... 23
When I consider Life and its few years 95
When I hear laughter from a tavern door..... 80
When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes..... 12
When in the chronicle of wasted time..... 16
When in the dark we slowly drift away..... 97
When our two souls stand up erect and strong..... 51
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought..... 13
Where Venta's Norman castle still uprears..... 25
While men pay reverence to the mighty things..... 75
Whoso list to hunt? I know where is an hind!..... 1
With brain o'erworn, with heart a summer clod..... 83
With heart not yet half-rested from Mont Blanc..... 55
With how sad steps, O Moon! thou climb'st the skies!.... 6
With stammering lips and insufficient sound..... 49
With you a part of me hath passed away..... 101

Yet it is pitiful how friendships die..... 80
Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach..... 71

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper proc
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Jan. 2009

PreservationTechnologi
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVA
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 090 901 4